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THE HOUSE OF HAPPINESS

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THE CHILDREN'S SIX MINUTES
MOMENTS OF DEVOTION
THE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

THE HOUSE OF HAPPINESS

BY
BRUCE S. WRIGHT, D.D.

PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY LIBRARY,
CHICAGO

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To

MARGARETTE
MY WIFE

HARRIET AND ELIZABETH
MY DAUGHTERS

ROBERT
MY SON

WHO HAVE MADE MY HOUSE
A HOUSE OF HAPPINESS

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A WORD FROM THE ARCHITECT

THE house I am writing about in these pages is not mine. God is the Architect and Builder. I am only the architect of these pages. These pages, however, do reflect a widespread interest in architecture. We are all interested in building. I have often thought that if I had not been a preacher I would have been an architect. In Manila, Philippine Islands, I helped plan and build a unique structure. It was a cathedral for the tropics, a temple wide open to the four winds of heaven, with deep porches to soften the glare of the sun, and a covered roof garden over all whereon our Sunday school met every Sunday of the year. Close at hand was our tropical parsonage, with similar wide spaces and deep porches, with vines and ferns and stately palms on every side to subdue the noonday light that fell throughout the year with unclouded brilliance upon tired eyes. I have lived in lands where the snow is deep and in lands where snow is never known; but wherever I have lived, wherever I have gone, I have found that God gives us a house suitable to our surroundings and needs. We carry it with us. To honor that house, to use it as the Architect and Builder intends, to cause its doors to open with cordiality, its hearth to hold the fire of holiness, its windows to shine with happiness, its stairs to lead up, ever up toward God, to make it a house of progress as well as stability, is the purpose of these pages and the prayer of the author-architect.

I

THE OWNERSHIP OF THE HOUSE

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THE OWNERSHIP OF THE HOUSE

YOU BELONG TO GOD

I am thine.

Psalm 119: 94

THE Psalmist lifting his eyes to his beloved hills and his life to his acknowledged God says: "I am thine. I belong to thee."

I belong. That is a noble declaration. It takes its place side by side with the assertion, I believe. I am not advocating another creed; the one we have is sufficient and comprehensive. But if we were to have another creed, not to supplant but to add to the one we have, I can imagine such an excellent creed built around the words, I belong. For example: I belong to my country; to serve its highest aims; to advance its noblest purposes; to register and to vote; to be as concerned over moral advance as I am over tax reduction; to be as vociferous and enthusiastic over the patriotism of peace as over the patriotism of war; I belong to my country, not right or wrong, but to see that my country is forever right.

I belong to my city; to think of the entire city's interests; to consider the whole city and not my community alone; to pray, to plan, and to work that my city may have a fair name among the cities of the land.

I belong to my home, to think of it not solely as a place to eat and sleep, to come to when there is no place else to go, but to center there my affection, my endeavor; to give to my home not only things but thought; to provide for my home both heat and health, light and love, conveniences and courtesies.

I belong to my work, to give it my best; to give it not the fag-end but the first-end of my strength; not barely to earn my salary or wage but to earn it plus; to take pride and find joy in my work; I belong to my work, through my work by which I earn my daily bread to express my highest self.

I belong to my friends, not merely to get out of them all that I can but to give to them all that is possible; to think of them not only when I am in trouble but when they are in trouble; to base my friendships more and more on the spiritual rather than the material in life; I belong to my friends, to speak the kind, not cutting word; never to betray them, but always to be loyal.

Yes, a new and eminently fitting creed could be built around the words, I belong.

It is a thought of abiding power; let us say with the Psalmist, I am thine, I belong to God. You do belong to God. You belong to him by creation. God created you, breathed into you the breath of life, and made you a living soul. You belong to him by rightful possession: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and

they that dwell therein." You belong to him by adoption: "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." You belong to him by purchase: "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price."

"Our Lord is crucified—
Is crucified for me and you,
To bring us rebels back to God;
Believe, believe the record true,
We all are bought with Jesus' blood."

You belong to God by the logic, the unanswerable logic of love—I have loved thee with an everlasting love.

"O Love that wilt not let me go!"

You belong to God. That is the broad statement. Let us separate it into four definite statements.

First, your body belongs to God. Among the creations of the Creator the human body surpasses all in wonder and power. The body is a perfect machine. There are more than three hundred movements known to modern mechanics, used in modern machinery, and all these movements are simply copies or adaptations of the various movements of the machine we call the human body. The body is a storage house of power. Some one has estimated that if all the beats of the human heart in a single day could be concentrated in one huge throb of vital power it would be sufficient to

lift a ton of iron one hundred and twenty feet into the air. An electrical engineer states this power in the language of his profession by saying that the heartbeat represents a two-candle power of an incandescent lamp, or, in common terms, forty candles of light. If the human body had some such organ as the firefly has, he could surround himself with light enough to live by without a spark of artificial lighting. The similes which one might employ, the illustrations one might give to tell the story of the human body are endless; enough to say that among the creations of the Creator the human body surpasses all others in wonder and power. Now there are two conceptions of the use of the body—the pagan and Christian. The pagan conception abuses the body that the soul may prosper. The pagan conception proceeds on the false logic that the more the body suffers the more the soul will prosper. The Christian conception is that the body is the temporal house of the soul, and that as the house of the soul it should be kept clean, strong, and healthy. And while it is possible to have a great soul in a frail body, and there are many illustrations of that, yet the high purpose of the Creator is that of a noble soul in a sound body. The pagan conception pays little attention to health, sanitation, sickness, plagues, hospitals, stamping out disease, caring for the sick, and getting at the sources of sickness to blot it out. It is the Christian conception of the body

that has practically outlawed smallpox. Macaulay, a hundred years ago, said that in England in the last century a person without a pitted face was the exception. To-day a pock-marked person is rarely seen. If you will call the roll of the diseases and plagues that have preyed upon human life, you will find that it is the Christian conception of the body that has attacked those plagues, subdued them, and made life infinitely more healthy and happy. A hospital within reach, a physician within call of nearly every inhabitant of the United States is the Christian conception of the body. Hospitals hundreds of miles apart, trained physicians so few that they are but a drop in the bucket to the call, is the pagan conception of the body. But one need not go to the cannibal islands of the sea or the backward races to find the pagan conception of the body; it is right here in the United States. Intoxicating liquor, by the license system or by the bootleg method, is the pagan conception of the body. Strong drink never did anybody any good; it is a poison; it is the worst criminal of the centuries; it is the unblushing outlaw of society; it is the plague of plagues; it is cancer, leprosy, and insanity thrown into one. Prohibition in the United States is the Christian conception of the body. And because civilization moves forward by science, and reason, and intelligence, and law, and the Christian conception of the body we will never go back on our word. Prohibition is written into the

constitution—of the Christian conception of the human body.

The truth upon which all this concept is built is contained in the familiar words, "Ye are the temple of God. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

In the second place, your brain belongs to God. But some one says, "Is not the brain a part of the body?" Well, it is and it isn't. It is so separate from the body, its functions are so distinct, its power so imperial, that it should be spoken of separately. The Apostle Paul was thinking of the brain and not of the body when he penned that classic, that prose-poem that will live as long as literature lives—

> "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true,
> whatsoever things are honest,
> whatsoever things are just,
> whatsoever things are pure,
> whatsoever things are lovely,
> whatsoever things are of good report;
> if there be any virtue,
> and if there be any praise,
> think on these things."

A man's character follows in the wake of his thoughts. What he thinks, that he is. A man's strength of life and efficiency in his work are in proportion to the strength and efficiency of his brain. John Wesley was unbending in his insistence that his preachers should read. He wrote to

one preacher who was neglectful of his reading: "Your talent in preaching does not increase. It is the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep. There is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this. You can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian." It is this last phrase that compels attention: "One can never be a thorough Christian without reading." Reading what? Is one a thorough Christian who reads newspapers, magazines, easy books whose pages are comprehended at a glance? He is not. There must be discernment in reading. "A balanced ration is as wholesome for the mind as for the body." If you read only the daily paper, you will conclude that the world is going to the devil at the rate of a mile a minute. A Church paper, a religious weekly that is not forced to fill so many columns every twenty-four hours, that can look at events calmly, with true perspective, will tell you of the progress of true religion, of the victories of morality and righteousness. Consider the reading matter that is on your table. Is there a distinctly religious paper or magazine there? If I could have one wish for my Church which could be fulfilled this very day, it would not be for additional endowment, nor for beautiful memorial windows, nor for any added adornment to the building that I love; it would be

that every home in my parish could have the weekly visit of my Assistant Pastor, a religious paper.

There is something else: your money belongs to God. As there is a Christian conception of the body and brain, so there is a Christian conception of money. It is not difficult to tell what the Christian conception of your money is NOT. It is not that of the man whose fields yielded plentifully, whose barns were full and overrunning, who had a big surplus in the bank and a big selfishness in his soul; who said to his soul: "You're a good fellow, you are far-sighted, you have provided for a rainy day, for many rainy days; now enjoy yourself, you have only yourself to think about; you don't have to think about your God, your neighbor, your Church, only yourself; O my soul, you are a good fellow, have a good time." And now comes the end of the chapter, and it comes with unbelieving suddenness, like lightning out of the sky—that very night his soul was demanded of him. It stands to-day as it stood then, as it will ever stand in the economy of human life and material values, he who does not do with his money what God wants him to do will be cursed; the curse may not come with the suddenness that it came to this man, but it will come. "Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small." And he who does with his money what God wants him to will be blessed. Money curses or money blesses. It is an axiom.

It does not need to be proved. It is true of the dime and the dollar and the thousand-dollar check, money curses or money blesses.

There is one other investment which cannot be omitted, for certainly if your body and your brain and your money belong to God, your time belongs to God.

"My times are in thy hand," sang William Lloyd.

All our time belongs to God, but some time particularly belongs to God. I speak now of the Christian Sabbath: that time in your life belongs to God. You have six days for yourself, you owe the seventh day to God. How do you spend your Sunday? There are four interpretations of Sunday. There is the Continental Sunday—wide open. There is the Careless Sunday—worship God in the morning if it is convenient; do anything you please in the afternoon or evening; if you have been holy in the morning, you have a right to be hilarious in the afternoon and evening. There is the Commercial Sunday—a day used for financial profit. Fourth, there is the Christian Sunday—the day recognized as God's day, not a day of restrictions, not a day when one stays in the house and does nothing, not a blue day but a glad day, a different day. Some one asks, and young people are honestly troubled about this—"If there is a good movie and one goes to it on Sunday afternoon, what is there wrong with that?" Without being accused

of narrowness this can be said: You are entering into a commercial transaction; the theater is run for profit; when they produce a good movie and throw open the doors for free admission, then will be ample time to raise such a question. Besides, there are six days for the movie and God asks only one. Your time belongs to God.

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. The Psalmist has not only lifted up his eyes, he has climbed the hill, there he is on the very peak. Hear him as he says, "I am thine." Take your place by his side and speak the noblest resolution human heart can utter: I belong to God.

II

THE INSCRIPTION OVER THE PORTAL

THE INSCRIPTION OVER THE PORTAL

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD!

And in that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord.

Zechariah 14: 20

THIS is the prophet Zechariah's vivid description of something that took place in Israel long ago, of what ought to take place everywhere at all times. The horses that before were used for war will henceforward be dedicated to peace. The harnesses that were dipped in the blood of slaughter will hereafter be beautiful with the color of salvation. The bell that proclaimed hate will now sound abroad—Holiness unto the Lord. What a remarkable circumstance when even the bridles of the horses sound abroad the message of holiness!

This is so out of date, some one protests. Today, if one waited for the proclamation of holiness until it was told upon the bells of horses, he would wait until doomsday. For the horse has all but disappeared from our main thoroughfares. Yes, but something else has come in his stead. I am perfectly willing to modernize this statement. In that day there shall be seen upon the radiator caps of the automobiles, Holiness unto the Lord. That

would be an improvement upon some things that pass for radiator caps. One day a man remarked to a friend, "Michelangelo was a great sculptor." "Michelangelo! Who was Michelangelo? What radiator cap did he design?" Now that I have shown my willingness to modernize this sentence let us return to the original phraseology. For with all the progress registered by the transition from the horse to the auto, all of which we gladly admit, accept, and utilize, the language and figures of speech of the Bible are most impressive. The language of the Scripture is warp and woof of literature's finest fabric. We love and cling to the ancient phrase, as being just as correct and infinitely more impressive than any modern translation could possibly be. Now then, let us apply this fine old phrase, so vivid and impressive, to four vital interests of human life.

Where shall we begin? Why not begin where this verse begins, with the nation, and say, There shall be upon the bells of the nation, Holiness unto the Lord? That is what the prophet was talking about. He was speaking of the national life of Israel and her association with the surrounding peoples. Holiness was to mark their relationships. What is the primary function of a nation? Some one replies, "To assure to the people life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It is a good answer. But how is a nation to assure these rightful privileges to its people unless the nation is holy;

that is, whole, wholesome, sound? I do not mean that I would have inscribed in letters of bold relief over the entrances to the Senate and House of Representatives the words, Holiness unto the Lord. But I would have every senator and representative know of a certainty that "Righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is a reproach." I would not advocate a sectarian religious test for every aspirant to public office, but I would have every man and woman, ambitious to hold office, know that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." I would not advocate that the words, Holiness unto the Lord, be painted upon the bow of every battleship and the muzzle of every gun. But I would have the armed forces of the nation know that the noblest use of steel is not the creation of five-million-dollar battleships but fifty-dollar plows. I would have them know that the most effective instrument of peace is not a gun, but a plow. There have been no guns but plenty of plows along the Canadian border, and we have had more than one hundred years of peace with the people to the north. There have been few plows but plenty of guns along the Mexican border and we have had a hundred years of bickering, bitterness, and bloodshed with the people to the south. We may not agree upon the mooted question of armament and preparedness, but we can agree on this, that the primary function of a nation, in legislation, diplomacy, and treaties; the essential background of

the people's rightful privilege of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is, Holiness unto the Lord.

There shall be upon the bells of education, Holiness unto the Lord. What is the main object of education? It is not to acquaint young people with the three R's, teach them to mind their P's and Q's and a few other letters thrown in for good measure. It is not to grant degrees. It is not the creation of an aloof, educated class. What then is the answer? Some one says, "Education is intended to fit one for life." Correct; go to the head of the class. But wait a moment, what does it mean to be fitted for life? What is the chief element in that process? Is it not holiness, wholeness, health, soundness of mind and body? There can be no true education apart from morality and spirituality. On Thursday, representing my own school, Allegheny College, I attended the opening exercises of the Centennial Celebration of the University of Toronto. Many things impressed me. I was impressed with the extent of the University. It has an immense and beautiful campus with many noble buildings and a student body of nearly six thousand young people. Second, I was impressed with the plan of the University. It is composed of a group of federated schools, unbound by sectarian limits, all faiths working together in perfect harmony in the one great university. I was impressed with the number of schools and learned societies sending representatives to felicitate To-

ronto. There were 231 from all over the world. They came from colleges and universities of Japan, China, India, New Zealand, Australia, Africa, Europe, the British Isles, South America, and North America. It was a thrilling sight to see the immense arena crowded with friends of the University; to look upon these representatives from the ends of the earth, in their academic garb, somber blacks, brilliant reds, purples, blues, and crimsons; to follow the stately yet heartfelt exercises of welcome and congratulation—all done in the name of education, to celebrate the one hundredth birthday of a great school. But most of all I was impressed with one of the buildings, Hart House. It is the Commons for the young men of the University. There is a massive, lofty dining hall, reading and game rooms, baths and showers, endless rooms for varied group meetings, a beautiful little chapel opening off the main corridor, into which one may step from the crowded, noisy hall and be as quiet and far-removed as though he were in the heart of a great forest. Hart House, the gift of the Massey family of Toronto, so generously provided for, so nobly planned, so solidly built, looks as though it had always stood there and that it never could be moved. It was begun before the war as a training headquarters for Canadian youth. But the thing that impressed me most was the inscription, occupying the entire wall at the great-

hall end of the main corridor. Living words, cut in enduring stone, I read—

> HART HOUSE SHALL BE DEVOTED TO MUSIC, GAMES, SPORTS, FRIENDLY DISPUTATION, THE CASUAL BOOK, THE MASTERY OF THE BODY, ALL THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE CREATION OF WISE AND EARNEST MANHOOD. AND AS IN THE DAYS OF WAR THIS HOUSE WAS DEVOTED TO THE TRAINING IN ARMS OF THE YOUNG SOLDIER, SO IN TIMES OF PEACE ITS HALLS MAY BE DEDICATED TO THE TASK OF ARMING YOUTH WITH STRENGTH AND SUPPLENESS OF LIMB, WITH CLARITY OF MIND AND DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING, AND WITH THE SPIRIT OF TRUE RELIGION AND HIGH ENDEAVOR.

As I read these last words, "true religion and high endeavor," in imagination I saw inscribed over every building of that great university the prime object of all education—Holiness unto the Lord. As in many things, so in this the Bible speaks the sufficient word, "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is education."

A third interest of human life is industry. There shall be upon the bells of commerce, Holiness unto the Lord. What is the fundamental object of business? "Profit," some one replies, "to make money, that is the first aim of business." No, you are wrong. How long do you suppose that business would endure that had written over its door the motto, "Business for gain!" Before the war Germany sent goods all over the world stamped with the information, "Made in Germany." Other

nations followed her example and we read upon different articles, "Made in Japan," "Made in France," "Made in England." We began doing the same thing, "Made in the United States." That stamp meant to say, and in most cases did say, "Because this article was made in Germany or France or England you may be assured that it is well made, you are getting your money's worth." Now suppose that very effective motto should be supplanted by another, "Business for gain." How long would business hold her head above water weighed down with such an ideal? Not very long. The world is a pretty honorable world when it comes to business and industry. The railroads are not run to make money for the stock holders, but to serve the public. Banks are not conducted to capture the highest rate of interest, but assure safety to the trusting depositors. Most stores are run, not to pile up profits, but to give to the customers value received. I have heard it said of a certain contracting firm, "If they have the contract, you need not worry about the work, it will be well done; that is the way they do things." Even at that, honorable as business is, it could stand a little more religion. We, every one of us, whatever his business or profession, should be as Hiram Goff, of whom a man one day inquired his business and Hiram replied, "My business? O, my business is to serve the Lord; I cobble shoes to pay my expenses." Thus he spake "Holiness unto

the Lord" to the souls of men the while he mended the soles of their shoes.

There is one final interest of life, more gripping, more inclusive, that is personality. Upon the bells of personality there shall be, Holiness unto the Lord. "What is the chief end of man?" is still a pertinent question. And the answer is as of old, "To glorify God and enjoy him forever." Our chief aim is to manifest God through our personality. A holy personality is the irrefutable logic of faith. Years ago when Hugh Price Hughes was alive and a mighty force for righteousness in London, Charles Bradlaugh, a noted atheist lecturer, said something to which Mr. Hughes took exception. Mr. Bradlaugh came back with a challenge to a public debate in one of the great London halls. Mr. Hughes was not slow to accept, but he laid down certain conditions. He would bring with him one hundred men and women who had been lifted from a life of shame and sin by the faith he preached, into a new life in Christ. And Mr. Bradlaugh was to bring one hundred men and women as living evidences of the faith he preached. Also he stipulated that on the night before the debate they would visit together a dozen Christian homes, schools, and institutions to show what Christianity could do for those who embraced it sincerely. He hoped also that they could visit a dozen non-Christian homes, night clubs, and gambling rooms to show what atheism did for those who followed it.

That was the last ever heard from Charles Bradlaugh about a public debate with Hugh Price Hughes. It was the unanswerable logic of a holy personality.

Zechariah, ancient of days, modern of moderns—we accept your timely exhortation. We are resolved to heed it. Upon radiator caps and bridles; upon battleships and guns; upon machines and engines; upon college halls and study books; upon business and legislation; upon plows and reapers; upon pulsating personality; upon the bells of our daily life we will inscribe, not

Politics unto power,
Government unto oppression,
Education unto show,
Business unto gain,
Pleasure unto thrills,
Selfishness unto self,

but we will inscribe

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.

III

FEET THAT CROSS THE THRESHOLD

FEET THAT CROSS THE THRESHOLD

HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET!

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!
Isaiah 52: 7

HOW beautiful are the feet! The feet *are* beautiful. We speak of beautiful hands; why not beautiful feet? There is a poem about beautiful hands—

"Such beautiful, beautiful hands,
They're neither white nor small;
And you, I know, would scarcely think
That they were fair at all.
I've looked on hands whose form and hue
A sculptor's dream might be,
Yet are these aged wrinkled hands
Most beautiful to me."

We say that aged, gnarled, and wrinkled hands are beautiful. By the same token we may speak of tired, sore, deformed feet being beautiful. I have never seen such a poem. I hope some day some one will write it. I will agree to memorize it and repeat it often, this poem-to-be about beautiful feet. We *sing* about beautiful feet. We con-

secrate our feet, along with life and voice, hands and lips, time and money. With Frances Havergal we sing—

> "Take my feet and let them be
> Swift and beautiful for thee."

This poem about beautiful feet has not yet been written, but it has been dramatized on the stage of the New Testament. One day Jesus was invited to be a guest in a certain Pharisee's house. He accepted. As he reclined at meat, a woman, a notorious woman of the town, entered, stood close by, in penitence and adoration. Then she took something she had brought with her, an alabaster box of ointment, and began to anoint Jesus' feet; her penitential tears mingled with the precious ointment; with her long hair, flowing loose in token of her mourning, she wiped his feet. All this, according to the customs of her day and race, she did to let it be known that she sought forgiveness for her many sins. And Jesus said, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Still more dramatically, for Peter was nothing if he was not dramatic, Peter declared: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my head and my hands; wash me entirely, that I may be clean every whit." No, the poem about beautiful feet has not been written, but it has been vividly enacted. And truthfully so, for the feet are beautiful. They are beautifully useful. From the physiological standpoint how beautifully useful

they are! What would we do, what could we do without our feet? They take us about the house, up and down stairs, from room to room; they carry us down town, here, there, and yonder; they run our errands. Beautiful feet! Then when we add to the physiological, spiritual significance, the feet are surpassing beautiful—that is, the feet whose steps are ordered of the Lord. Of such feet did the prophet speak when he said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet!"

How beautiful are the feet of the *Climbers.* Not the social climbers, but the mountain climbers. I think the idea of the mountain was placed here not as a high-sounding grammatical phrase, but as an essential ideal of life. Life, in its ideal; life, to attain the ideal, is a climb. It is the upward way. It is the hard way. It is the rugged way. A smooth cement highway, stretching away and away, in any direction one wishes to go; a Pierce Arrow, a skillful chauffeur, sinking back in cushioned ease while the landscape flits by—that is not the accurate picture of life. Life is not a cement highway; it is a mountain climb. Not the foot on the accelerator, but the feet on jagged rocks, climbing makes beautiful feet. I think of the beautiful feet of the shepherd. He brought his sheep within the fold one night. As was his wont he counted them as he let them through the gate. One, two, three, fifty, fifty-one, ninety-eight, ninety-nine; one sheep was missing. The faithful shepherd

was tired and hungry, but one sheep was lost. Refusing supper or rest, followed by his equally faithful dog, he retraces his steps, "over the mountain wild and bare," his way marked by blood, his hands torn by thorns, climbing, until he finds his lost sheep, until, at dawn, he brings back his own. Yes, we must climb if we would find and save the lost. We must climb if we would find and save ourselves. One does not find himself, his truest, best self down in the valley, on the lowlands, by the swamps; he finds himself upon the heights, where the air is clear, where the vision is far. One finds himself, his truest, best self, at the end of the climb, not before. The climb is essential for the development of the soul. As the muscles are hardened by the mountain climb, so the soul is strengthened as one pursues the upward way. I think of all the climbers of history, of the early climbers of the Christian faith, as Reginald Heber describes them—

> "They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil, and pain;
> O God, to us may grace be given
> To follow in their train."

Let us pray, not for lighter burdens, but for greater strength to bear our burdens; let us choose, not the easy way, because it is easy, but the hard way, because it leads upward, for beautiful are the feet of the climbers.

How beautiful are the feet of the *Conveyers*—

of good tidings! This is really the heart of the message of this verse, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" That is a great message. It was a message needed in Isaiah's time; it is needed in our time. The tidings of ill have swift feet. They crowd our steps behind and before. They greet us in the morning, they pursue us to our bed. Have you ever heard anyone say, "I dread to open my paper, for I know I am going to read tidings of ill"? I think the world is not worse than in other generations. It only seems worse because we know more. Tidings of ill have such facilities for rapid transit that when an evil happens in Berlin in the morning we hear of it in Buffalo in the afternoon; when war breaks out in Nanking in the evening we are informed of it at the breakfast table. Tidings of ill have swift feet. 'Tis best that 'tis so. If evil, sorrow, sickness, war, and death exist in the world, it is best that we know where they exist and know it as quickly as possible that the rest of the world may respond just as quickly with tidings of health, peace, and good will. Such are the tidings of this verse—tidings of health and peace in quick response to need. So important are these tidings that they are reiterated five times—good tidings, salvation, tidings of good, salvation, and the regnant God.

"The watchmen shall lift up their voice," says the prophet, when they see the messengers running with these tidings. What a picture! A beleaguered city. Fearful inhabitants crowded within. They cannot hold out much longer. They hope for outside help. They pray that help may come. Watchmen are stationed along the walls, eagerly scanning the horizon for help. They see runners hastening, runners whom they readily recognize as bearers of tidings from friends, good tidings—how beautiful are the feet of those runners! So may we convey to watchmen upon distant towers good tidings. Good tidings from America to the nations of the world. To Mexico let us say, in the deathless language of a distinguished Senator, "God made us neighbors, let justice make us friends." To China let us say, We are your friends, your friends who in firmness require that you protect noncombatant life and property; but we are your friends who sympathize with you in your upward struggle; your friends, we do not want to interfere, we want to help. Not only nations, harboring millions within their borders, but to the individual soul, let us be conveyers of good tidings, saying, "If any man confess his sin, he is faithful and just to forgive him his sin, and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness." To a weary, troubled world let us bear the glad tidings of a regnant God, Thy God reigneth. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the conveyers of good tidings!

How beautiful are the feet of the *Children!* Jesus, riding into Jerusalem, humbly, upon a beast, fulfilling the prophetic word of his coming, was met by a great multitude who in their enthusiasm took their garments and threw them upon the ground, and branches from the trees, to make a highway for their King; and they cried, "Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." Children were in that throng. They followed Christ into the Temple, where, after the cleansing of the House of Prayer, they continued their sweet hosannas. But their hosannas were not sweet to the chief priests and scribes; they were sore displeased. They said, as we sometimes hear people say, The children, O the children, what do they amount to? And when they petulantly went to Jesus with their criticism, Jesus said: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." The children had their place in Jesus' thought. Children have always had their place in the Christian religion. Sometimes it has been an ill-advised place. Note the Children's Crusades of the thirteenth century when thousands of children and young people set out in little bands from many places in Europe, headed for Mediterranean ports, that they might sail to Palestine to rescue their Holy City from the hands of the enemy. Whatever became of many of those children history is not able to say; they were preyed upon, they per-

ished in sickness, or were drowned at sea; some returned home. An un-Christian Christian movement it was; who was to blame? But even in its most tragic moment how beautiful were the feet of those children going out to rescue the city of their Christ in the name of the Christ who had done so much for them! Here is a supreme test of the Christian faith from which it emerges with the stamp of highest honor upon it. Christianity recognizes the claims, rights, privileges, duties, obligations of childhood. Christianity says: How important it is to have children, to train them right, to treat them fairly, to instruct them well; to teach them their obligations as well as their rights. Christianity says: How beautiful are the feet of the children!

One thing more, How beautiful are the feet of *Christ!* "He went about doing good" is the sufficient biography of Jesus. Behold him, walking the paths of Galilee, doing good. I see him at the last, turning from Pilate's hall, walking the way that led up Golgotha's steep. He walked, carrying his cross, not only his cross, but yours and mine, the cross of the sins of the world.

> "He saw me plunged in deep distress,
> He flew to my relief;
> For me he bore the shameful cross
> And carried all my grief."

How beautiful upon our mountains of human need are the faithful feet of Christ!

IV

THE PROTECTION OF THE HOUSE

THE PROTECTION OF THE HOUSE

A STRONG MAN WITHIN

No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Mark 3: 27

THIS does not mean your house at 465 East Utica Street, or 1127 Delaware Avenue, or 1568 Hertel, or any house of wood, brick, or stone in which you may sleep and eat. It refers to the house of character which you carry about with you; the house in which you not only eat and sleep, but live and move and have your being. We do not want thieves to enter our house of brick and wood to steal such possessions as we have. If they do enter, they will have to enter through doors and windows that are locked, and against our watchful guardianship and vehement protests. Least of all do we want thieves to enter our house of character and plunder it, turning it upside down and carrying off precious possessions. Goods that are taken from our house of brick and wood may be replaced, or their loss may be covered by insurance. But possessions that are plundered in our house of character are not easily, if ever, replaced.

Though Lloyd's may boast that they insure anything under the sun, they cannot insure the loss sustained through the plundering of a soul. The prodigal son came home, but he was still the prodigal son. The father's forgiveness was beautiful to behold, like unto the forgiveness of God, but the son whom he forgave was still the prodigal son. The robe that was placed upon him was a costly robe, and the ring that was put upon his finger was pure gold, but the robe covered and the ring adorned a prodigal. The feast made by the friends, their music and dancing, was all eminently befitting the occasion, the return of one who was given up for lost, but he was still a prodigal. No longer a prodigal in the far country among swine, but a prodigal at home among friends. A prodigal forgiven, but a prodigal just the same. No insurance has yet been devised that can restore character to the one who has squandered character. The house that was plundered may be all fixed up so that one would never guess that it had been torn upside down; but however new and fresh it looks it is a plundered house, it was once violently entered. The point is that we are to develop such qualities of strength that we, strong men and women, can successfully defy any plunderer who may cast his avaricious eyes upon our precious possessions. What are some of these precious possessions?

Well, there is the possession of *high thought.* Be so strong in the guardianship of your high

thoughts that the plunderer named Low Thoughts cannot bind you and rob you of your great possession. I use the phrase "high thoughts" rather than "good thoughts" because thoughts may be good without being high, but if they are high they are of necessity good. The devil may have good thoughts, but they are not high. We all freely acknowledge that the seat of authority is in the mind. The mind originates and controls every least movement of the body. When you are walking down the street and you come to a crossing your mind says to your foot, "Step down off the curb," and your foot obeys the dictates of your mind. So it is throughout the day and throughout life. The body does not go anywhere, does not do anything without the authority and leadership of the mind. Or to change the figure, the mind is the vault where we deposit the treasure of life. The big banks have vaults where one may rent a safety deposit box for the keeping of his treasure. But one cannot get into the safety deposit box without considerable ceremony. If you have such a box and you desire to get to it, you present yourself before the great iron door and when you are recognized the man within will take out a key to unlock the gate and let you in. You must sign your name and produce a key to your own box, then you are permitted to look at your rightful possessions. More precious than any treasures you may have in a safety deposit box

are the high thoughts of your mind. Guard those high thoughts well, not to keep them in—you want them to go out into circulation, as money circulates—but guard them to keep them high. The high thoughts of life are always in demand, always in use, always appropriate. Aristotle maintained that you can tell a high-minded man even by the way in which he selects a toy for a child. High thoughts are not reserved for the great and occasional events of life. Plutarch held that the lesser thoughts are usually more revealing than the formal and official acts of a man's life, that a chance and unconsidered saying will often let you see farther into his heart than his set public speeches. You need only to meet a man or woman, hear a few sentences drop from his lips, to know whether he is high-minded or not. A man's work and words reflect his own mind, whether it be high or low. A man writes a book which he names "Elmer Gantry." The book is directed against preachers generally and against Baptist and Methodist preachers particularly. Poisoned arrows are aimed at the evangelical expression of religion, but the arrows fall far short of their mark. The book serves only to reveal the low mind of the author. He, a strong man, permitted himself to be bound and his high thoughts stolen. Guard well thy high thoughts.

Again, there is the possession of *faith*. Be so strong in the guardianship of faith that the plun-

derer Fear cannot bind you and rob you of this precious heritage. Among the most ruthless spoilers of life are fear, anxiety, distrust. "How are we coming out?" "What will happen to-morrow?" "If that should happen, how could I ever stand it?" are questions that are constantly arising in our thought, plunderers of our peace of mind. Jesus realized that fear is a miserable thief, so he said to his disciples: "Do not fear, do not worry about to-morrow, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Paul, the great unfolder and amplifier of the truth that Jesus taught, emphasized this important teaching. Paul said: "Do not be anxious for anything; but in everything, with prayer and thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This is the promise of God. Let us take it for what it is worth. What is it worth? It is worth everything. Therefore do your work, do your best, leave with God the rest. God will take care of you.

"Through days of toil, when heart doth fail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you.

God will take care of you
Through every day,
O'er all the way,
He will take care you,
God will take care of you."

"I will trust, and not be afraid," said Isaiah. The will enters into this as into all things, and it is for us to bring our will into action and say with the prophet, "I *will* trust, and *will not* be afraid."

There is a third precious possession, closely akin to the one we have just noted, and that is *contentment.* Be so strong in your guardianship of contentment that the plunderer Envy cannot bind you and steal this valuable heritage. One of the best treatises on contentment by poet, preacher, philosopher, or essayist that was ever written was penned by Paul to Timothy. He wrote to him these shining words: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us therewith be content. But they that will be rich [Notice how he puts this; he does not say, They that are rich, or, They that through honorable methods become rich; but he says, They that will be rich, at whatever cost, whose consuming ambition is to be rich] fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil [and no generation needs this statement more than the present generation in America]:

which while some have coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Contentment. A few days ago entering the city of Rochester the Pullman porter of the chair car passed through the car and shouted in a loud, clear, and pleasant voice, "We are now entering the beautiful city of Rochester, the great commercial city of Western New York, the beautiful city of flowers." Hearing him shout that and watching him at his work, I said to myself: "He is contented with his job. He does not envy the conductor, or the engineer, or even the president of the road; he is a contented man." One evening Wilfred Grenfell stood on a platform and talked of his work among the neglected folks of Labrador as pictures were thrown on the screen. There appeared on the canvas a picture of a schoolhouse, and in front of the schoolhouse was a crowd of children. Lifting his pointer and indicating the children, Dr. Grenfell said: "They are mine, they are all mine." And they were, in a unique sense, for they were children who would not have had a chance at school had it not been for the Labrador doctor. If you have ever met or listened to Dr. Grenfell, you know he is a man who is contented with his work. He would not trade places with the king of England, or with premiers or presidents—he is all three in one in his realm by the sea—and he is contented. Contentment does not mean that one is satisfied, that

one has settled back in indolence and ignorance; he has done all he is going to do, ambition is dead; "The world owes me a living, I will now collect it." Nothing of that. Channing put it superbly in his Symphony, "Contented with my possessions, but not satisfied until I have made the most of them." I mean contentment as bitterly opposed to envy; contentment that says to envy, "You miserable offender, ruthless plunderer of the joy of life and peace of mind, you shall not bind me, you cannot spoil my house."

There is another possession—*belief*. Be so strong in your belief that the plunderer Atheism cannot enter your house and rob you of your wealth. It is a sad state when a man reaches the point where he doesn't believe anything—sad for the man himself. There was Leslie Stephen, a fine soul he was, but an agnostic. When his wife died he wrote to a friend and said, "I thank [then he remembered that he had nobody to thank, so he left it a blank]—I thank —— I have known her all these years." How are we going to safeguard this precious possession, belief? How are we going to safeguard it in the lives of our young people who are assailed on every hand by doubts and questions? A few days ago in the young people's division of the State Sunday School Convention some one arose and offered a resolution to the effect that our colleges and universities provide Christian teachers in the science departments. It

provoked considerable discussion, rather profitless discussion. But there was one young man who arose and said, "I had a Christian teacher in my science course, a true scientist but not a disturber of faith; I believe, but other young men sat under the same teacher and went out to doubt and denial." The opposite is true. There have been unbelieving teachers of science and young people have sat under such teachers, yet their faith has not been disturbed. Important as it is to have Christian teachers in all departments, it is more important that one safeguard belief in one's own heart. A young person can be so sure of God, so strong in his own hold upon God that he can walk through the very fires of atheism and not be burned. Or, to hold to our figure of speech—Atheism can pound at the doors of his house but cannot get in; or getting in, he cannot bind him.

There is one final possession, the *grace that is in Christ.* In the language of the great Apostle, "Thou therefore be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Be so strong that no plunderer of thought or word or deed shall rob you of this most precious of all possessions. When that great scholar, A. B. Davidson, a poor student lad, came to Aberdeen, at first lonely and homesick, he used to steal out of his bare room and roam about unknown streets, and sometimes he would stand and look hungrily into a lighted home where the members of some happy family were gathered and wish

that he could have some of the happiness they were enjoying. And then some one would pull down the blind. Thus, shut out, he would slip away into the night, blacker, lonelier, colder than ever. But no one is shut out from the grace that is in Christ Jesus, no one is shut out from anything that Christ has—he is yours, all that he has is yours, all that he promises is yours. Claim it, keep it, use it, let no foul plunderer bind you and take from you that which is more precious than life itself.

V

THE PRESENCE IN THE HOUSE

THE PRESENCE IN THE HOUSE

THERE AM I IN THE MIDST

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18: 20

SOME one has remarked that a blind man can always tell when there is a small congregation. If the congregation is not large, the minister, somewhere or other during the service, probably in his prayer, will refer to the promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou art in their midst." While this quotation is proper under these conditions, such is not its primary use. It is not meant to be a rescuing party to save from utter oblivion and failure a disheartening service. Besides, to use this promise solely in this way assumes too much. It assumes that a gathering of several hundred people is a success, no matter what may take place; and that a gathering of two or three people is a failure, on the face of it. Christian people turn to this promise with a feeling akin to desperation—Lord, there are only a few of us here; we tried to get more but we could not, but your promise is—Where only two or three are gathered together there thou wilt be in their midst.

No, this promise is too great and precious to be turned to as a last resort, to call to mind only when we are in desperate circumstances; it is a plain statement of Christian truth—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Brierley, the English essayist, speaks of the "*fallacy of bigness.*" We think that if a thing is big that is enough, let us at once fall down and adore! We boast our big cities, a city's fondest ambition being to surpass in bigness the nearest rival. One big building is a challenge to some one to erect another bigger building. Big ships sail the seas; big engines pull big trains; men with big incomes occupy the limelight. The fallacy of bigness is by no means modern. It is as old as human endeavor. For it was in the morning of mankind that the people were enamored of bigness and they said to each other, "Let us show how big and powerful we are. We will make brick, baking them so they will be strong and durable; out of the slime we will make mortar. With the brick and mortar we will erect a tower that shall reach to heaven. By the erection of this big tower we will make a name for ourselves that shall never be forgotten." They succeeded; the name Babel still lives, but it lives as a reminder of a tragic experience in the lives of men and women who were bewitched by bigness. A big world, big nations, big civilizations, big cities demand big institutions, big struc-

tures, big plans, big ideas; but mere bigness, bigness for bigness' sake is a fallacy.

Bigness is not synonymous with knowledge. The vastness of our universe overwhelms us. We are only an infinitesimal part of our universe of infinite reaches. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" So says the Psalmist. So says the astronomer sweeping the heavens with his telescope. Our earth, he tells us, is 92,000,000 miles from the sun. But away out there, on the edge of the circle of our universe, is another world, called Neptune. Neptune is not 92,000,000, but 2,791,000,000 miles distant from the sun. Our earth seems plenty large enough for us, but yonder is another world, Jupiter by name, eleven times the size of our earth. When the astronomer tells us such things, our spirit is overwhelmed within us. But let us not forget that the mind that can comprehend all that vast universe is greater than the universe, and the mind is very small. And too, let us remember that a world just as full of wonder and mystery is revealed to us by the microscope as by the telescope. If we were asked to name which has been the greater blessing to humanity, the microscope or the telescope, we would have to reply, the microscope. The microscope reveals a tiny world, but power is in that tiny germ,

seed, drop, or tissue; power, wonder, mystery, and knowledge. The fallacy of bigness is put to rout when we contemplate man's mind and the microscope.

Nor is bigness another word for influence. The fallacy falls before that test. Not long ago a little gathering was held in London, made up of the Premiers of the Independent States forming the British Empire. The Premiers were there from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, Ireland, Scotland, and England — with their king counting nine. Not a very large group. The London Coliseum and the London theaters had many hundred times that number of persons within their walls every afternoon and evening the Premiers were in session. A very small group, but a very influential group. Which is the most influential group in the United States government? The House of Representatives? The Senate? Neither. It is a choice between the Cabinet and the Supreme Court, depending on the personnel of these two groups. They are small groups, but groups of wide influence. A few disciples, what can they do? Arrayed against them is the mighty Roman Empire, whose thousands of her legions are instantly summoned to crush the first semblance of opposition. Now the Roman Empire is gone, but the influence of the disciples is a beautiful path down all the centuries and around the world. In religion as in government we do not confuse in-

fluence with numbers; it is a fallacy that cannot stand.

Where two or three are—said Jesus. *I am not a literalist,* yet I think we should *emphasize these very numbers that Jesus used,* where two or three are gathered together in my name. We will do that, using four relationships of human experience.

First, *where two or three books are gathered together and the spirit of learning, there is an education.* The University of California with its seventeen thousand students, and all the other colleges and schools following along with their thousands, does not mean that those thousands will be educated. Very few of them will attain to that, for it takes more than a great school to give a young man or woman an education. Nor will an immense library do it. The real question is not, How many books in our library? but, How many books in us? We say that a person is well-read. That does not mean that he has read well-nigh everything; rather it means that he has read *well* a few things that are fundamental and essential. Not many books are required for an education. Abraham Lincoln had only six months of schooling in all his youth and a library of five books—the Bible, "The Pilgrim's Progress," Æsop's "Fables," "Life of George Washington," and a History of the United States. Five books, and a spirit of learning! Years later when he decided to study law a couple of volumes of Blackstone were placed

in his hand. Two volumes of law, and a spirit of learning. It does not take many books to give one a religious education, two or three; the Bible, a concordance or a commentary, a book of history, two or three books and a spirit of learning. It was said of a certain man of power that he "was a man of one Book." He knew the Bible and he knew it thoroughly. That is a difficulty when we come to study the Bible; we surround ourselves with all sorts of so-called helps, forgetting that the Bible is its own best interpreter. The truth stands; hear it, young people surrounded with books: where two or three books are and a spirit of learning, there is an education.

In the second place, where *two or three dollars are gathered together and a spirit of foresight there is prosperity and philanthropy.* Henry Ford is variously pictured to us to-day as one of the richest men in the world. He was not always a rich man. Once he had only two or three dollars; two or three dollars and the spirit of foresight made him rich. By this we are not to imply that whoever has two or three dollars and the spirit of foresight will be rich. But he will be prosperous. Here again we are hard against the old fallacy that confuses riches and prosperity. A man may have very little of riches and yet be most prosperous. All that one needs for prosperity is a home, food, clothing, and a few of life's privileges as well as necessities; two or three dollars and a spirit of fore-

sight will give that. And two or three dollars and a spirit of foresight will make one a philanthropist. "I cannot give a large amount," people say, "therefore I will not give anything." It is the same old fallacy that bigness is philanthropy. It is no such thing. He who gives his thousand may be less of a philanthropist than he who gives his ten; it all depends. One may not be able to pay five hundred dollars a year to the Current Expenses and Missions, but not a person in all the constituency of the Church cannot give something, on both sides of the envelope, every Sunday. It comes down simply to this, two or three dollars and a spirit of foresight.

There is a third thing to say—namely, *where two or three ideas are gathered together and a spirit of intelligent persistence there is a blessing to humanity.* Current history furnishes us a remarkable illustration in Thomas A. Edison, now in the ninth decade of his useful life. Some one tells the story of his achievements thus graphically: You step out to take the street car, but there is no street car, for the control switch has not yet been invented. You return to your home and say to yourself, "Well, I'll read awhile." You get a book, find a comfortable chair, reach up to snap on the light; but there is no light, the incandescent electric bulb has not yet been invented. "Then I'll have a little music," you say, as you turn toward the phonograph; but there is no phonograph,

that has not yet been invented. You say that surely there is something on the air to-night and turn toward the radio, but there is no radio. Suddenly you remember an important long-distance call to Chicago. You take down the phone and ask for long distance. There is no long-distance service, you are told, the long-distance transmitter has not yet been perfected. Your mind reverts to your evening's entertainment. "There is a splendid movie downtown, I'll go down and see that." You go out to the garage to your car, step within the car, put your foot on the starter, but it is dead; there is no storage battery as yet. You slam the door of the garage in exasperation and start walking downtown. What is the matter with the streets? They are as dark as country lanes, a few gas lights sputtering here and there at the corners, no electric lights. Finally you reach the theater and you are told, "There is no movie; it is not yet invented." Thus one might go on indefinitely, for more than three hundred pieces of electrical appliance may be traced to his industry and genius. The whole story is written here in the language of Scripture: Where two or three ideas are gathered together and a spirit of intelligent persistence, there is blessing and comfort to mankind. Not every one has the ideas of a Thomas A. Edison, but every one has ideas. It does not require a whole flock of ideas to be a blessing; two or three, plus intelligent persistence.

Now, last of all, and most important of all, is the exact statement of the verse. All that has gone before is perfectly true, but of course Jesus was not talking about books, or dollars, or ideas; he was talking about people. Where *two or three people are gathered together in his name he is there in their midst.* People are everything. People were everything with Jesus; manuscripts, money, ideas, institutions concerned him only as they were related to folks. Two or three people, and Christ in the midst, that is a *home.* Let me tell you of a home I frequently visit. It is the home of the oldest member of my congregation. A few days ago I went to the house; my ring was answered by the daughter of the aged man I had come to see. She said: "Just wait a moment and I will bring him into the living room." "No," I protested, remembering his great age and feebleness, "let me go where he is!" "All right," she replied, "he is out by the pantry window where the sun shines. The sun comes best in this window and he likes to sit in the sun so he can see better to read." And there he was, sitting in the sunlight, this man, 99 years of age, reading without glasses. He laid his Bible down as I stepped in; he knew me; he knows all his friends. Paper and pencil were on the narrow shelf before him. He said to me, "I am reading the Bible through and I am putting down the number of times I find the name God and Jesus." His clear mind, his gentle voice,

his sweet spirit, I could have wept for very joy; this aged saint is the product of a Christian home and Christian living. It was true as I read on his wall, "Christ Is the Head of This House, the Unseen Host at Every Meal, the Silent Listener to Every Conversation." Two or three persons and the presence of Christ make such a home. This is also the making of a Church. Who said that there must be a thousand members to make a Church! Who said a service is a failure unless there are several hundred present, crowding the main floor and filling the galleries! Who said a prayer meeting should not be held, so few come! Who said that pastor's ministry in a certain Church was a failure, because during a revival period he received into the membership of the Church only one boy! (But that boy was Matthew Simpson.) Who said anything about great numbers at all? Certainly Jesus did not. Where two or three are met *in Jesus's name,* there is he in their midst, there is a Church. The only true Church is Christ in the midst.

> Though the preacher speaks to the multitudes with the tongues of men and of angels, and Christ is not in the midst, it is not a Church. And though we have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have all faith so so that we can remove mountains, and Christ is not in the midst, it is not a Church.

Spiritual radiance and blessing are not dependent upon numbers. We ourselves have been most deep-

ly moved in smaller gatherings. In some upper room, or lower room, where two or three, or two or three score were met together, plus the manifest presence of Christ, then spiritual milestones have been set along the way. John Wesley was not born again in mighty St. Paul's, but under the eaves of St. Paul's in a little room in Aldersgate. For their faith Nebuchadnezzar caused three loyal men to be cast into a burning fiery furnace, to be rid of them forever. But when he and his counselors looked they saw them walking unharmed in the fire, and they saw a fourth, and the form of the fourth was like unto the Son of God. Peter, James, and John went up into the mountain; they took Jesus with them; he was transfigured before their enraptured eyes; they were elated, blessed beyond words; they shared in the Transfiguration. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them. In the furnace of affliction or on the mountain of Transfiguration, *I see Christ there, in the midst.* You can count on him; can he count on you? Two or three of you here, and there, and everywhere meeting, working, aspiring, living *in His name!*

VI

THE MOTTO ON THE WALL OF THE HOUSE

THE MOTTO ON THE WALL OF THE HOUSE

PRAISE YE THE LORD!

Praise ye the Lord.
Psalm 135: 1

THIS verse was not chosen at random, though it might have been. We might have opened the book of Psalms at almost any point and found this sentiment. These very words are repeated over and over again in the Psalms. Psalms means Praises. We speak of this wonderful book of the Old Testament as the "Book of Psalms." Quite as accurately it may be called the "Book of Praises." The book begins with benedictions and ends with praise. First, blessing to man, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Last, glory to God. Talk about the Hallelujah Chorus! We have it in the last Psalm; voices, orchestra, organ—everything is here:

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary;
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him for his mighty acts:
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet:
Praise him with the psaltery and harp.
Praise him with the timbrel and dance:
Praise him with stringed instruments and organs.
Praise him upon the loud cymbals:
Praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord."

More than any other one piece of literature the Psalms signify the spirit of thanksgiving. This is the spirit that should prevail; the spirit that we should have not once in a while but all the while. How often do we meet some friend and after greeting him inquire, "Well, how are you to-day?" And his reply is, "Oh, I have nothing to complain of." Nothing to complain of! Is that as far as we can go? Nothing to complain of! Can we not lift ourselves to the higher level, the level not of refusal to complain, but insistence upon gratitude?

Praise is a spirit that can be cultivated. A blind man was out in the northern part of our city walking toward Main Street, where he was to take a car for Lockport. He traveled much on the street cars and apparently knew exactly what he was about. As he came to Main Street, a friend stepped to his side and said, "Let me go with you across the street." He piloted him through the traffic. Having a few moments to spare, he stood waiting with the blind man. In a moment or two a car came in sight. "I believe this is your car," said the friend. The blind man listened; "No, that's a Hertel car." Then a big yellow car hove in sight. "Here's your Lockport car." "No," said the blind man, "that's the high-speed car." Then the Lockport car did come. The friend, already amazed at the uncanny knowledge of the blind man, kept still, not saying a word. Then

up spoke the blind man, saying, "Well, here's my Lockport car; good-by." Now if a blind man can so cultivate his sense of feeling and hearing that he can see even in his blindness which way a car is going, surely we, with all our faculties intact, should be able to cultivate that spirit of gratitude that so changes life and brightens the world. Praise ye the Lord.

What for? How can we ask such a question! What for? We are like the little boy who learned to swim in a small pool, and who was taken for the first time to the ocean. His bathing suit was put on and he was bidden to wade in. But he just stood there on the sand, looking with open-eyed wonder at the vast expanse of water. "Why don't you go in?" his mother asked. With a touch of injured dignity he replied, "Because I didn't think this was made for little boys; it was made for big ships." Well, the ocean of God's blessings was made for little boys and big men; let us all wade right in and praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord for a PREPARED WORLD. One might say, Beautiful world; it is that, a beautiful world. O the ravishing beauty of God's world! But I am thinking of another side. We, all of us, from Adam down to the last baby born this very day, came into a world already prepared and waiting for us. The how of creation is not as vital a matter as the fact of creation. Columbus sailed west, through days of alternating hope and fear,

until he came to America, a prepared continent, and fell upon his knees in gratitude to God for preservation during the perilous voyage; while with lifted cross he claimed the land in the name of God and for his king. He and those who followed him did nothing to prepare this continent. It was all here, its mineral wealth, its richness of soil, its wooded hills, its mighty rivers, its pure springs—a prepared continent.

> "I love its rocks and rills,
> Its woods and templed hills."

But you and I have never done a thing to cause its rills to run or its hills to rise: it is a prepared continent. Where is the Garden of Eden? The whole world is a Garden of Eden, prepared for us. Trees for fruit. Fields for harvests. Stones for building. Jewels and metals for adornment. Natural resources for manufacture and the inventive genius of man. Day and night, the day for work and the night for rest. Seedtime and harvest, spring and autumn. The pathless sea across which man may make his own paths guided unfailingly by the North Star or the Southern Cross. Sunrise and sunset. A prepared world. We never get over the thrill of it. Praise the Lord for it.

Praise the Lord for ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY. We have come into a prepared world, but that is not enough. According to the Book, we are to go out and subdue the earth, cultivate it, have

dominion over it, accept our responsibility. A boy goes to school. He finds waiting him a magnificent building costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, but not costing him a single penny. He finds study rooms, laboratories, and halls with splendid equipment, all there with no effort on his part. He finds scores of teachers, trained, into whose training his influence or power never entered, whose salaries are paid without any recourse to his humble and limited means. All this he finds, a prepared school; it becomes his only on the basis of accepted responsibility. Education is not the prepared equipment; if it were, one could get an education by going in the front door and out the back just as some people go through college. Education is accepted responsibility. All life is like that. You are a working man or a business man. You face your task to-morrow. There it is, waiting for you, prepared for you; but it will not perform itself, it will not run itself; it waits for you. Now what a wise provision of the Creator this is! He prepares for us a world, but bestows upon us the responsibility of its development. Praise ye the Lord!

Praise the Lord for ACHIEVING POWER. A prepared world plus accepted responsibility equals achieving power. A man occupied a piece of land many years ago. The buildings on the property were run down; he renewed them and has kept them renewed all these years. He set out trees and

beautified the landscape; he planted orchards and cultivated them; he grew vegetables and fields of grain and vineyards of grapes; he drove a well and obtained pure water. He came to the land years ago, finding a prepared soil, with infinite possibilities; he accepted his responsibility and behold the result. A man assumes a business. The business was run down. Machines were there, but they had long been idle. The product had not been the best, therefore customers dropped off one by one. But there was the business. A man accepted the responsibility of that business; threw himself into it; planned; worked; lived with that business until he built it up. A prepared business plus accepted responsibility equals achieving power. A pastor went to a church. The church was run down, both the building and the congregation. The causes are not a matter for discussion. There was the church, an excellent opportunity, a prepared church for a courageous minister and an indefatigable worker. He accepted the responsibility, planned, called, prayed, preached, worked, exalted Christ, and the result was that the church looked up, people came back, they were helped, souls were saved. A prepared church plus an accepted responsibility equals achieving power. Praise ye the Lord.

Praise the Lord for MATERIAL BLESSINGS. "I am going to count the stars," said a little girl to her father as they were walking home one clear,

starlit wintry night. "All right, go ahead." "One hundred and twenty-one, one hundred and twenty-two, one hundred and twenty-three. O dear, I had no idea there were so many."

> "When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
> When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
> Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
> And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

This song does not rank with the great hymns of the Church, but we like it just the same.

> "Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
> Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
> Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,
> And you will be singing as the days go by."

Praise ye the Lord!

Praise the Lord for SPIRITUAL CHOICES. Our blessings are material, they come to us usually irrespective of our deserts. This is one of the marvelous provisions of Providence, which Jesus himself pauses to remark upon in the Sermon on the Mount. "For," says he, "your heavenly Father maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The bounties of the table are as available to the thief as to the teacher; as purchasable by the bootlegger as by the shoemaker. "Verily they have their reward." But it is not so with spiritual blessings; they are a matter of choice. A dishonest man can grow as good potatoes as an honest man, but he cannot grow as good a character. A

libertine can build as good an automobile as a man of rectitude, but he cannot build as good a soul. A flagrant lawbreaker can wear as fine clothes as the man of proven integrity, but he cannot wear as fine a face, looking the world squarely in the eye, nor can he have as upright a bearing; nor can any man for any price go into a store and buy firmness of step and nobility of countenance. A vast gulf is fixed between material blessings and spiritual choices. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve. Ye cannot serve God *and* mammon." Praise the Lord for spiritual choices, for the Providence that sets us up upon our feet, gives us a mind and a will and says, "Choose!" Praise ye the Lord!

Praise the Lord in TIMES OF GLADNESS. We sometimes forget then. There are some great words back in Deuteronomy. Oh, this Book is full of great words, and here are some spoken to Israel. Moses says to the people, "When the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to give thee goodly cities, which thou buildedst not; and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not; and wells digged, which thou diggedst not; vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full, beware lest thou forget the Lord." What a picture! Preserved, prospered, well-fed Israel forgetting God. Beware! America is in greater danger to-day in

the hour of her glad prosperity than ever in the dark hour of the thirteen colonies struggling for national life. Let the nation praise the Lord! So with the individual. The hour of prosperity is the time of testing. Make it a rule of your life to praise the Lord in the time of gladness. Praise ye the Lord!

Praise the Lord in the TIME OF SADNESS. That saintly woman, Frances Ridley Havergal, used to say, "Once the will of God was a sigh; now it is a song." When you praise God in the time of your sadness the sigh will become a song. I marvel as I read the autobiography of Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau. Stricken with tuberculosis, he went up into the Adirondacks in an effort to stay the ravaging disease in his own life. But he could not be idle there. He thought of others similarly stricken. He formed what has grown into the most remarkable Cottage Sanitarium for tuberculosis sufferers the world knows. And what has been the secret of its rise? Praise to the Lord. For one of the earliest things he did up there was to establish a Sunday school made up of the children of that section, taught by himself; then he caused to be built a log chapel, which later gave place to a permanent stone House of Praise. You are not wholly without your sadness; some of you have more sadness than gladness; I dare say to you, Praise the Lord, and the sigh will become a song.

Praise the Lord. Praise the LORD. Not our own strength, not our highly developed civilization, not all our modern conveniences and comforts, not science, nor nature, nor philosophy, nor education, nor electricity, nor radio, but Praise the *Lord.*

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise!"

Why a thousand tongues? Why not use the one tongue we already have?

VII

CONVERSATION IN THE HOUSE

CONVERSATION IN THE HOUSE

SPEAKING GOOD OF OTHERS

Master, say on!

Luke 7: 40

MOST of us are 33d degree members of the Ignoble Order of Faultfinders. To find fault is about the easiest thing in the world. To do the opposite thing is not as easy. Not as easy, but vastly more important. To see good in others, in others in whom there may be very little good, requires definite purpose and action of the will. It is a virtue to be cultivated. It is a Christian grace which may well be made a matter of prayer. Even a casual study of the life of Jesus reveals the fact that he was not a faultfinder. He saw the good in others. He saw good in those in whom the common run of men saw little good. He saw good in some who seemed desperately anything but good.

Jesus saw much good in Zacchæus. Others saw little or no good in him. To begin with, Zacchæus was of the despised class. He was a publican. He was a taxgatherer. Taxgathering is a touchy subject. It was no less so in Jesus' day than in ours. With this added unpleasantness, the taxgatherer of Jesus' day was looked upon more as an extortioner than an official of the government. He

paid so much for the privilege of gathering the taxes, then extorted for himself as much above that amount as he could. Also, religion entered into the matter. The Jews keenly resented the idea of paying taxes to Rome. They felt that to do so was a mark of disloyalty to their God. Money and religion, touchy subjects both! And they both centered in Zacchæus. He was anything but popular. Physically he was unattractive. He was a small man. Smallness of stature is by no means a bar to greatness or usefulness; many of the greatest persons of history have been small physically. But its first impression is a handicap which must be overcome. Combined with an unpopularity that borders on hatred which already exists, it constitutes a double handicap. Now look upon this man Zacchæus, this extortioner, this little man, in the streets of Jericho on a day when the place was in a tumult of excitement. Jesus was passing through Jericho. Zacchæus was quite as curious as the rest. He, with all the others in the multitude, wanted to see Jesus. But he could not. He was so small that he could not look over the heads of the people. He was so unpopular that no one would let him through to a place of advantage in the front row. But where there's a will there's a way. Zacchæus had a will to see Jesus, he would find a way. Here is the way, a path that leads straight up to a seat on the limb of a sycamore tree. Up he clambers, and when Jesus

passes by he looks straight out over the heads of the throng and obtains a reserved-seat view of the Master. And Jesus sees him. "Zacchæus, come down; I want to see you in your home; I should like to tarry there a bit with you." And Zacchæus came down gladly. When the multitude saw them together, they began to find fault: "See, he has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But even as they were murmuring Zacchæus was making his confession and his consecration to Jesus, saying, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation [He knew what was wrong with him and his calling], I restore him fourfold." "To-day," said Jesus, "salvation is come to this house; for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." We may truthfully paraphrase it by saying, The Son of man is come to seek and find the good in others.

Jesus saw much good in the Pharisee Nicodemus. To be a Pharisee was to be unloved in the popular mind. The Pharisees were the religious, and later the political, aristocrats of their day. They put immense emphasis upon technicalities and the letter of the law. Theirs was a false emphasis of life—so false that Jesus pronounced against them his bitter but true series of woes, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, blind guides." Nicodemus was a Pharisee, coming under that condemnation. But Jesus saw good in

Nicodemus. He was an earnest seeker after truth. He encouraged that good, and Nicodemus has a large place in the New Testament, and a warm place in our hearts, as one who was brought out by Jesus, who saw good in him.

Jesus saw good in the nameless woman (the New Testament is kind; it does not always give names) who came in off the street to minister to Jesus, to wash his feet with her tears and have him wash away her sins. The man in whose house he was a guest was rebellious within. He said to himself: "This Jesus is no prophet; if he were, he would have known the character of this woman, he would have had nothing to do with her, penitent though she was." Jesus, who read his thoughts, said: "Simon, I have something to say to thee." "Master, say on." "I entered thy house as a guest. You have been anything but a courteous host. I needed water for my feet; you gave me none. This woman hath washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. The kiss of welcome you did not give me; this woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil you did not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." And to her he said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." We fondly believe that she fulfilled the good Jesus saw in her.

Jesus saw good in the expiring malefactor. This, it seems to me, is most difficult of all: to

see good in one condemned for a serious crime against society; condemned after due process of law. Justly condemned, for so he himself admitted. But Jesus saw good in him, and smiled upon him, from the cross of excruciating pain, the smile of glad promise and hope. This is the attitude of Jesus revealed all through the Gospel record. "He went about doing good," says Luke. As truly we may say, He went about seeing good . . . in others. He saw good in others, touched it, encouraged it, brought it to harvest and usefulness. He fulfilled, long before they were written, Fanny Crosby's lines—

> "Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
> Feelings lie buried that grace can restore:
> Touched by a loving hand, wakened by kindness,
> Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

Now then, to see the good in others does not mean that we are to blind ourselves to their faults. I venture there is no tendency among parents more reprehensible than this, the tendency to see only the good in their children, to be blind to their faults. Faults, unless corrected, grow into grievous wrongs, ugly defects of character, sins against self and society. Most of the acts we call crime, for which we arrest people, put them in prison, and exact punishment, are faults run riot. The time to correct faults is in early youth. The proper people to correct these faults are their parents. Too many parents are blind to their chil-

dren's faults. Their children can do no wrong. It would be well if all parents could see their children as others see them. They would see and appreciate the good in them, and at the same time they would not be blind to their faults. Being too close to one has a tendency to blind us not only to another's faults but to his good qualities as well. Dwelling in the same household, closely associated with others, seems to draw a veil over one's eyes so that neither the good qualities nor the faulty ones stand out clearly. Absent from home and loved ones for a period, one sees things in a different light; from that vantage point both the good qualities and the faults may be exaggerated, but they have this virtue: they do stand out in clear relief. It is likewise true of other things, of nations and organizations. Distance lends not only enchantment but discernment as well. We are too close to our democracy to see clearly our faults. We can see the faults of a monarchy, for the monarchy is at a distance. But our democracy has faults, and the fact that there are so many good things in our democracy must not blind us to our faults. Things are so easy-going in our democracy. We are too lenient. We laugh at our mistakes and faults when we ought to be weeping over them. Wave upon wave of crime and misdemeanor sweeps over the country, and nothing is done. We are so intent upon standing up and singing vociferously the "Star-Spangled Banner," so

close to our glorious democracy, that we are blind to our faults. Likewise it is true of our Protestantism. Protestantism has done so much for us, as a nation, as a member of society, as individuals, that we are apt to see only the graces and beauties of Protestantism. Protestantism has her faults and it is better that they be seen and corrected in the house of her friends. There comes to us an old poem, brought down from the tenth century, a poem by an anonymous poet. The poem is entitled "A Good Bishop." The picture of the bishop is drawn in the clear lines of the poet; a worthy man is the bishop, fitted to be the pattern of all, both inside and outside his flock. Virtue dwelt in his house, such virtue that the emperor obeyed him. He was fair and honorable to both sides in a controversy, so fair that both sides trusted him implicitly—

> "His words were frank and open;
> He spoke truth fearing no man;
> To the unruly he was sharp,
> To the gentle he was mild."

He saw the good in others, but that did not blind him to their faults. He was lavish in his commendation of their good; he was faithful in his condemnation of their faults.

Now there are three convincing arguments for the Christian grace of seeing good in others. The first is that it is a matter of common justice. Look at the life of David. He had some grievous

faults and deep-seated sins. But if we are going rightly to estimate David's life, we dare not stop with his faults, we must also look upon his good qualities. He had many good qualities. As a matter of common historical justice, in which the Bible bears us out, we must see David's good qualities as well as his faults. Riding on a train a few days ago to attend a funeral in another city, I had an illuminating conversation with the manager of the American Surety Company in Chicago. He is all for Chicago, except one thing, the city's crime record. "The worst in the country," said he, "with the possible exception of Kansas City and St. Louis." He explained that the situation in the two latter cities was due to the fact that they are in close proximity to some of the great prisons of the country. The prisoners, released, with no money, no place to go, no work, no one to trust them, turn again, from sheer necessity, to crime. No one sees any good in a man who has been in prison. As a matter of common justice, if there is any good in a man released from prison, if he wants to run straight, society should be so organized that it would see that good and give him a chance. Prejudice obtains such an easy sway over us. Even with our friends, we weakly permit a prejudice to blind us to their good qualities. Many a home has been wrecked because of such a narrow prejudice. Many a Church member has soured his own Christian experience and termi-

nated his blessed influence by permitting a mean and selfish prejudice to magnify and minimize the good qualities in his fellow Christians. As a matter of common justice we owe it to others, to the meanest and least deserving of others, to look for their good qualities.

A second convincing reason for the cultivation of this Christian grace of seeing good in others is that it furnishes a basis for understanding and work. We understand one another better when we look for the good in one another. In London for two generations or more one of the commanding centers of evangelical Christianity not only for London and England but for all the Christian world has been the City Temple. And yet it was to this center of evangelical Christianity that there came representatives of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, the Hindu faith, Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Theosophy in a gathering called "the fellowship of faiths," to talk together of peace and brotherhood as taught by these seven living world religions. A little later in the same city another fellowship was held with speakers from these same faiths to answer the question "What does Christianity mean to Buddhist, Confucian, Hindu, Jew, Mohammedan, and other non-Christian creeds?" This at least may be said of such gatherings: however fruitless they may seem to the critical eye, they furnish a basis for understanding and work. That was the attitude of Abraham

Lincoln when friends came to him and told him of the grievous faults of his fellow cabinet members. He pointed out their good qualities. "We need their good qualities," said he; "let their faults be lost sight of in the usefulness of their good qualities to the great cause." We cannot always see eye to eye. Probably it is well that we cannot. But where there can be agreement let us agree as—friends. And where we cannot agree let us differ as—friends. Surely we need to see good in others, for we need a basis for understanding and work.

The third and great reason for the Christian grace of seeing good in others is that it is Christ-like. Christ saw good in others. If there was any good to find, he found it. He was relentless in his search of the human heart for good. It was the Master's way.

"More like the Master I would live and grow;
More of his love to others I would show;
More self-denial like his in Galilee;
More good in others I would ever see."

VIII

SALT ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE

SALT ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE

YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Ye are the salt of the earth.
Matthew 5: 13

IF you were asked the question, "Which is the more valuable deposit, coal or salt?" what would be your reply? Coal is a valuable natural resource in our machine age and industrial world. But more and more, everywhere, electric power is being created through the development of water power. It is possible that even our vast modern world of machinery could get along without coal. But to live without salt, that is out of the question!

Salt has always been highly valued. From the very beginning of human history it has been prized, and men sought it in caves and by the seashore. The nation that had a good supply of salt was rich. A bag of salt, among the barbarous tribes, was worth more than a man. The Jews prized it especially because they lived in a warm climate where food was difficult to keep, because their religion laid particular emphasis upon cleanliness, and because salt was largely used in their sacrifices. Salt is an indispensable element in the food both of men and animals. A missionary tells us of natives in Africa who have traveled sixty

miles for salt. Their hot African blood, lacking the purifying and health-giving salt, has broken out in painful ulcers which drain the life and energy; and when the mission house has been reached they have begged, not for money or bread, but for salt. Even the poets and philosophers have lifted their voice in praise of salt. Homer calls it "divine." Plato speaks of it as a substance "dear to the gods." Byron says it is "that sacred pledge which makes hated hosts seem brethren to the sight."

Salt is also a great delight. It gives the touch that makes our food a pleasure. A king had three daughters, of whom he asked the question, "How much do you love me?" Two replied that they loved him more than silver and gold. The youngest said that she loved him more than salt. The king was not pleased with her answer, salt was so cheap in comparison with gold. But the cook, who overheard the remark, neglected to put salt in anything for breakfast the following morning, and the meal was so insipid that the king could not enjoy it. Then he understood his youngest daughter's reply; she loved him so well that she could not enjoy anything without him.

Despite the fact that salt is so necessary, so highly valued, and such a delight when added in proper quantities to our food, it is a most common element, is widely distributed and easily obtainable. A beneficent providence has placed salt-containing strata

on every continent and the larger islands of the sea. Then there are salt mines, brine pits, and salt springs. Should these fail, there is the ocean itself, whose salt supply is as "inexhaustible as its restless self."

Therefore we readily appreciate the significance of Jesus' words when he says, "Ye are the salt of the earth." He uses a figure of speech we know; he speaks a language we understand. Let us hold strictly to this figure and language as we think of the salt of the earth.

First, there is the *salt of Christian character.* Jesus was on the mountain side. He was seated, after the custom of the teacher of his day. For while we call it "The sermon on the mount," it might as truly be called "The lesson on the mount." There he sits, with his disciples near at hand. Doubtless others were there, but we know his disciples formed an important part of that audience. To them, looking each one straight in the eye, he said, "*Ye* are the salt of the earth." It is marvelous the influence of a single radiant, earnest character. His presence permeates the whole group. I have seen an entire shop respond to the unostentatious but resolute Christian character of one man in that shop; profanity, which before had been frequent, perceptibly decreased, or ceased entirely, when it was known there was one in the shop or over the shop who as an earnest follower of the Master objected to foul language as the only vehicle of em-

phatic expression. I have seen a college fraternity change its whole atmosphere because of one young man whose life was clean, whose mind was pure, who had convictions, and who had, what is quite as important, the courage of his convictions. We have seen a great State leap upward in moral achievement and grandeur through the influence of a governor who saw the evil of race-track gambling and set the forces of law at work to rid the people of this insidious wrong. A character that is definitely and aggressively Christian, at the same time possessing literary gifts of high quality, can create a taste in the common man of the street and the common mind of to-day for reading something that inspires, that does not leave a bad taste in the mouth. We are forever indebted to the Edward Boks, the Frank Cranes, the Kirby Pages, the Bruce Bartons for putting upon the popular, highly readable material of our day the stamp of sensible, joyful, militant Christian character. George Whitefield, Methodism's flaming evangel in the days of her humble beginnings, crossed the Atlantic thirteen times in pursuance of his duties. Always and everywhere he was an "evangel," and the place where he lived or spoke, was it a ship, or a mine, or staid old London, changed under the spell of his personality. He wrote of his first crossing of the Atlantic, that was when he was but twenty-four years of age, "On our first Sabbath nothing was to be seen on the ship but cards, and little heard but cursing and blasphemy.

I could do no more for a season than, whilst I was waiting, now and then turn my head, by way of reproof, to a lieutenant of soldiers, who swore as though he was born of a swearing constitution. I spoke to the military captain, saying that I would be glad to use each day a short collect for the officers. He replied, 'I think we may when we have nothing else to do.' " But long before that little, crowded ship had reached Savannah a complete transformation had been wrought. Not an oath was heard, many of the soldiers and sailors had been soundly converted, and in the great cabin, where the officers met, religion was a daily subject of conversation. Such was the spiritual triumph of a young man who took in earnest the words of Jesus, "Ye are the salt of the earth," who looked upon his own character and efforts as that salt.

In the second place, there is the *salt of the Christian Church.* We often hear it said, "I would not care to live in a place where there is no church." Men may ignore the Church, they may criticize it, yet they, particularly if they have children, fully appreciate the ennobling influence of the Church in the community. Speaking of criticism, the royal throne room of the arch critic is the Pullman smoker. The Church, along with everything else worth while, comes in for a flaying in the Pullman smoker. One day the Church was under discussion in that critic's chamber. A professional-looking man, sitting next the window, who was reading and apparently pay-

ing no attention to the discussion, closed his book, looked up, and addressed the group: "The trouble with the churches and the reason people do not go to church is the preachers. They are all ignorant, old fogies that are against everything and for nothing; they do not keep up with the times, their sermons are dull, their messages are antiquated, their services are awkward and uninspiring. I was reared in a Christian home and brought up to attend church, and under the influence of my mother I joined. But when I got out into the world I saw how stupid the old church was, gradually I quit attending and I haven't been for thirty years. I still believe in God, but I prefer to serve him in doing my own work as a physician rather than by going to church." One of the other passengers, who neither by intonation of voice or cut of garment had revealed that he was a clergyman, immediately accepted the challenge. He said: "You did not need to tell me you had not been to church for thirty years. Every statement you made told that you had never attended any of the splendid churches in your home city. You say the minister is uneducated and ignorant. You went right from high school to college. Now the course has been lengthened, but for many years a minister of standing has been required to have four years of college and then three years of theological training, making seven to your three of specialized training, and yet you say a minister is ignorant and uneducated. You say the churches

are sectarian and narrow. How about the Ministerial Union in every town, and how about the Federal Council of Churches of Christ, do they signify narrowness? You say the services are uninteresting and the sermon dull. Have you ever attended the Congregational services in your city? Did you ever hear the Rev. Mr. Blank of the Presbyterian Church in your own town, or have you ever heard the choir at the Methodist Church there? Now if you want to be fair and scientific in your investigation you will go to one of these churches next Sunday and you will write me what is true about it. Here is my card and I shall expect to hear from you." Now the physician was a fair-minded man; he went to church, he found the service so rich, the sermon so helpful, that he wrote his train-friend, "I came away from the church glad that I had gone and with a determination to go every Sunday." This church which so many criticize without knowing what they are talking about is, by the language of Jesus, by the test of time, the salt of the earth. I never had it more impressively stamped upon my heart than in my own experience in Manila. I was pastor of the Union Church of Manila, the Church which ministered to the largest number of Americans in the Islands, missionaries, soldiers, sailors, business men, teachers, tourists, and I know how that Church touched the lives of a procession of Americans; I know it steadied the moral and spiritual life of the American community in that great

city; I know that it was the salt of the earth to those people who were far from home.

Again, there is the *salt of Christian ideals.* Christian ideals, born in Christian character; they are adopted by the Christian Church, and sent out into life as messengers and angels of God to do good. How are we to distinguish Christian ideals, how are we to search and find them out? That is readily done. All we have to do is to stand on the hillside with the disciples and hear Jesus say, "Happy," for such is the word of our language best befitting the opening passages of what Jesus taught on the Mount—

> "Happy are those who feel poor in the spirit! The realm of heaven is theirs.
> Happy are the mourners! They will be consoled.
> Happy are the humble! They will inherit the earth.
> Happy are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness! They will be filled.
> Happy are the merciful! They will find mercy.
> Happy are the peacemakers! They will be ranked sons of God.
> Happy are those who have been persecuted for the sake of goodness! The kingdom of heaven is theirs.
> Happy are ye when men denounce you and say all sorts of evil things against you falsely for my sake! Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.
> Ye are the salt of the earth."

Here we have it. The salt of Christian ideals. In a sentence, Christian ideals are a rebellion against

the domination of *things*. "Things are in the saddle," says Samuel Strauss. The increasing stream of automobiles and radios, buildings and bathrooms, furs and furniture, liners, hotels, bridges, vacuum cleaners, cameras, bus lines, electric paraphernalia, moving pictures, railway cars, package foods, telephones, pianos, novels, comic supplements—we are a great people, and our American democracy has been exhaustively creative, but are we great enough to be the master of things, to refuse to be softened by things, to use rather than misuse things, to say, "My Christian ideals shall dominate things"? "Health," says Bruce Barton in one of his delightful little essays, "is more precious than things." And health is a Christian ideal. Jesus taught it. Jesus gave it. How much of the record of Jesus' brief earthly ministry is devoted to just helping people's poor bodies? Every healing ministry of sincere prayer, of skillful touch, of clean hospital is the salt of the earth. "*Happiness* is more important than things." Happiness is a Christian ideal, and Jesus taught it. He mingled with people, he went to their feasts, his was the joy of living. And everything that you do that causes little children to laugh, and old folks to be contented, and those "who bear the burdens in the heat of the day" to be cheerful, everything that makes for the happiness of God's children is the salt of the earth.

"*Kindness* is more important than things," and kindness is a Christian ideal. Jesus taught kindness.

He lived it. He was never too busy to stop and do a kindness. Every kind word that you speak, every kind deed that you perform is the salt of the earth.

Purity is more precious than things. Purity is a Christian ideal. Jesus taught it. Said he, "I want your thoughts to be pure, I want your motives to be pure." Every pure thought you have, triumphing over an evil thought, is the salt of the earth.

Peace is more important than things. Peace is a Christian ideal. Jesus taught it. It is better to sheathe the sword and be content with a few less things than to draw the sword and kill and maim just for the sake of a few more things.

Ye are the salt of the earth. So common is salt, yet so necessary! So poor, yet so purifying. The pauper has it in abundance on his table, and the rich man cannot get along without it. Salt, the saver, the sweetener of life! And *ye* are the salt of the earth.

IX

IN THE STUDY OF THE HOUSE

IN THE STUDY OF THE HOUSE

STUDY!

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2: 15

STUDY! At once there rises before our eyes the vision of libraries, encyclopedias, commentaries, dictionaries. We see a room lined with shelves, the shelves loaded with books. Not new books all of them. But old, leather-covered books, huge volumes ranging from end to end and top to bottom of the sides of the room. We see in the center of the room a large table laden with books. The books on the table are open. A man bends over the table, his hair is mussed, he wears spectacles, he is poring over the books. He is not hurried, he takes his time. He has a pencil with which he jots down occasionally some notes on paper. Now and then he pauses, settles back in his chair, and is lost in deep and serious thought. A cloud is upon his face. He is perplexed. A weighty problem disturbs him. He is studying that problem. Study! Such is the picture that rises before us as we face the first word of this familiar injunction.

This is one picture of the word "study," but only

one. Study as used here does not mean books primarily, because there were few books when this was written. Their books were cumbersome manuscripts and scrolls. Study as used here applies to every field of honest endeavor. It applies to the Tiller of the Soil. Study the soil; study the seed; study the rotation of crops; study what crops belong to your soil; study drainage; study cultivation; study fertilization; study the marketing of your crops—study to be the best possible Tiller of the Soil. This word "study" applies to the Maker of the Home. No home is ever built without study. I do not mean the structure, but the home itself, its atmosphere, tone, ideals, customs, habits, and relationships. Study to make the best possible home that can be made. This word "study" applies to the Worker in the Shop. A week or so ago a man phoned me saying, "I cannot be at church for the next Sunday or two; they are putting in three hundred thousand dollars' worth of new machinery in the department of the plant of which I am superintendent, and the only time they can do it is on Sunday. I am sorry, for I love my church and I like to be there; but it cannot be helped: I am subject to orders." Now I happen to know that this particular man studies his work, he knows what is to be done and how it should be done, therefore he is trusted in his department. The range of this word is very wide, its power is penetrating and deep. It means books, but it means more than books; books are only a

small part of its meaning. Its real meaning is diligence. Give diligence to show thyself approved.

Dwight L. Moody was a man who gave diligence to his chosen work. He did not know much about books. He read history only skimmingly, novels never. But he did study men and methods; he was diligent in winning souls. Some one with a turn for figures has calculated that in his diligence Moody traveled over a million miles, and that he personally prayed with over seven hundred and fifty thousand people. Heaven is richer by a million souls because of his efforts. One day a friend in kindly criticism, who had his welfare and advancement at heart, said: "Mr. Moody, you are a wonderful man and preacher; there is only one criticism, and that fault could be remedied with a little attention on your part: that is your grammar, you make so many grammatical mistakes." Mr. Moody, who no doubt knew of the mistakes he made and who was doing everything to correct his ungrammatical tendencies, replied: "I am doing all I can for God with the gifts I have. Are you?" In other words, I am diligent with my gifts, are you diligent with yours? That is what this word "study" means, be diligent in your work, whatever that work is.

Study to show thyself approved. That is a commendable motive, that one may be approved. We like the approval of men. It means much to us. The approval of parents means much to their children. Not flattery: flattery is so foolish. Not soft

words: soft words make soft children. But strong words of deserved approval. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is true enough. I suspect that there is too much spoiling done these days because discipline is spared. Spare approval and you rob the child, is also true; you rob the child of much that is his due. When a child does well, when he is obedient, when he shows initiative, judgment, conscience, and loyalty, let him know about it; do not spare your parental approval. The approval of older people means much to younger people. I am thinking now of young people under twenty years of age. When young people are under twenty older people seem much older. The gap between youth and age seems so much wider to youth than to age. Young people have all of life before them, they are looking forward; the years are long and move with leaden feet, so that they look up with considerable reverence and respect to older people. Their example is potent in their lives. Their words of approval will never be forgotten. Recall your own years from twelve to twenty. When you did something well, when you made an honest endeavor and felt in your own heart that you had done well, how much it meant to you when an older person spoke to you a few words of approval! I can truthfully say that my course in life was decided by approving words of pastor and teacher over my boyhood endeavors in Christian service. The approval of coworkers means much to one another. The approval

of employer to employee is a vital matter in industrial relationships. Periods of service by faithful employees should be recognized. Ten years, twenty and twenty-five years, forty and fifty years of loyal service should be noted by some word of approval, some token of appreciation. Nothing stirs my own heart more, almost moving me to tears, grateful tears of joy in the solitude of my study, than when of a morning I hear the whistles blowing, the bells ringing, then in the evening I pick up the paper and read that a certain engineer, completing fifty years of service on the New York Central, brought in his train for the last time, and the whistles and bells were a loud and sweet approval of his long and faithful record. He said good-by to his engine, patting it with loving touch; he is now retired, and he will receive a pension for the rest of his life. That pension is the company's tangible approval, so satisfying in old age. All great industries to-day are working seriously on pension plans. What are these pension plans? Simply the tangible word of approval of loyal service. No one thing will tend to industrial peace more than this, approval of those who work together, employee approving employer by sticking to the job, giving the best that is in him; employer approving employee by recognizing him as a coworker, sharing with him not only fair wages, but in recognition of long and loyal service, some of the profits in a wise pension plan. Approval from any one means much, even from those whom we

cannot approve. One day a special messenger brought to the parsonage door in Manila a communication which when opened I found to be a scroll about sixteen by ten inches of a very fine grade of paper, inscribed in a beautiful hand with colored inks. It was from the American prisoners in Bilibid Prison, some twenty of them, in which they reminded me that I had not visited them in a long time, that they were appreciative of my visits and my cheering words, and would I come again soon. I lost little time in answering their summons couched in terms of approval. The approval of any one is not entirely lost in the heart of the approved. More than a century since John Wolcott wrote some playful but true lines which are quoted to this day—

> "I do not like you, Doctor Fell,
> The reason why I cannot tell;
> But this I do know very well,
> I do not like you, Doctor Fell."

There is a difference between liking and approving. We may not be drawn to all people, but that does not mean that we cannot approve in them what should be approved. This is a very vital matter in Christian living. Study to show thyself, not loved, not even liked, but study to show thyself approved. The approval of others always means very much to us.

But there is a higher approval. This higher approval should mean everything to us. It is the approval of God. Conscience is one of the channels

through which flows the approval of God. "Herein do I exercise myself," says the Apostle Paul, "to have a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." "Our rejoicing is this," says the Apostle in another place, "the testimony of our conscience." There is no source of strength comparable with this—the approval of a good conscience. "His strength was as the strength of ten because he had developed mighty muscles," said the poet. No. "His strength was as the strength of ten because he was well armed, because he was behind a machine gun, because he was aboard an armored cruiser." No. "His strength was as the strength of ten because he was the head of a company of ten proven fighters." No. "His strength was as the strength of ten because his heart was pure." He had the approval of a good conscience. "Five of you shall chase a hundred, and one hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight," says a writer in the Old Testament. That is true, but it is conditional. it is conditional upon the five, who are arrayed against the hundred, having a good conscience; the hundred, who are arrayed against the ten thousand, having a good conscience. "Conscience doth make cowards of us all" is not true, despite the fact that Shakespeare said it. A bad conscience makes cowards. A good conscience makes men and women of indomitable courage; conscience makes heroes of us all.

"Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,
Were still in heart and conscience free,"

sang Frederick Faber. His song breathes the truth. I covet the approval of men. I covet infinitely more the approval of a good conscience. At the beginning of my ministry I was exceedingly sensitive to the approval or disapproval of men, of my Official Board, my congregation, of the public. I am not less sensitive to the approval or disapproval of men than I used to be, but something else has risen far above that in recent years—namely, the approval of my own conscience, the approval of God. I do not ask as much as I used to, "What will men think of this?" Rather I ask, "What will God think? Is it the right thing to do?" If it is the right thing to do and God approves through my conscience, what men think means little or nothing. During the Civil War many delegations called upon President Lincoln to approve or disapprove, to tell him what they thought should be done. One day brought a delegation from the city of Chicago, composed of clergymen. As they were leaving one of them said: "Mr. President, I am compelled to say to you, and I give it to you as a message from our Divine Master, through me to you, commanding you to open the doors that the slaves may go free." To this earnest entreaty Mr. Lincoln replied: "That may be so, sir, but I have studied this question by night and by day, for weeks and months, and if it is, as you say, a message from your Divine Master, is it not odd that the only channel he could send it by is that roundabout route, that awfully wicked city of Chi-

cago?" In the light of history we are convinced that Abraham Lincoln sought above all else the approval of God through his conscience and intelligence, and he was not going to act until he received in his own heart the approval of God for his great act. This is of surpassing value, Study to show thyself approved unto God.

A workman. It is an honorable thing to be a workman, because work is honorable. The Bible shows progress in the idea of work. It passes from a curse to a blessing. Back in the dawn of humanity man was condemned to "eat his bread in the sweat of his face." Work was looked upon as a curse pronounced upon man because of his sin. The centuries pass and the Bible shows a gradual but decided change in the attitude toward work. And Jesus says, "I must work." "My Father worketh and I work." The Christian conception of work is the pinnacle ideal of work, it is the only tenable ideal, so perfectly expressed in a single line by Henry van Dyke,

"Honest toil is holy service; faithful work is praise and prayer."

Therefore study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman. What kind of a workman? A workman that needeth not to be ashamed. If one's work does not give satisfaction, what under the sun can? "I am not ashamed of the work I have done to-day" is not an easy thing to say, cannot be said

lightly; but it should be our aim to be able to say it — preacher, teacher, doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief, rich man, poor man, "I am not ashamed of the work I have done to-day."

Rightly dividing the word of truth. That is, handling the word of God faithfully, lovingly, honestly. The Christian Church is intrusted with a grave but gracious responsibility, dividing, dispensing the word of truth to our times. Therefore be diligent, that you may be a workman unashamed; that in the work you do and the truth you live you may receive the approval of God.

X

THE HOUSE IS MEANT FOR LIFE

THE HOUSE IS MEANT FOR LIFE

THE ABUNDANT LIFE

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 10: 10

JESUS is the great giver of abundant life. Note the contrasting sentence leading up to this statement; it is a vivid sentence: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal," says Jesus, "and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." The worst thieves in human experience, the only thieves really to be feared, are not the thieves that rob banks, hold up gasoline stations and solitary clerks in out-of-the-way stores, and break into houses; the worst thieves are those who steal from life, who kill the ideals and destroy the loves that make for the abundant life. Jesus will have none of that charged to his account. "I am not a thief," he says. He comes to give, and whosoever will may receive, from his hands, the abundant life.

The question at once arises in the mind, "What is the abundant life?" There are some things the abundant life is not. It is not the exuberant spirit of youth. Youth is attractive. Youth is attractive

because it is youth. Young people do not need much else other than their youth to make them winsome. Youth has exhaustless energy. The energy of young people is bewildering to older people. Visit a summer camp of girls or boys; or attend a young people's summer institute; or step into a school or the young people's department of a Sunday school. Everything is life, motion, and energy. A successful summer camp or institute, a well-conducted school must plan for every hour of every day and night, plan the right sort of activities for the energies of the young people, for their energies will be consumed somehow, by helpful or destructive interests. Youth is effervescent. This effervescence permits youth to do many things that are proper for them, but reprehensible for older people. A few weeks since Cleveland entertained the International Convention of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. It was truly a young people's convention. Youth predominated, youth held the reins, the spirit of youth filled the city. Eighteen thousand took part in the Christian Endeavor parade. The parade was held on the 4th of July, their celebration of the 4th as well as an illustration of their crusade for Christ. Here they come, up Euclid Avenue, these young people, twelve abreast, rank upon rank, wearing paper hats, red capes, red aprons, blue smocks, red overalls, yellow tams, carrying red and blue balloons that bob overhead, singing, endlessly, tirelessly—

"Like a mighty army moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;
We are not divided, all one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity."

Yellow tams, red and blue balloons, and singing the great marching hymn of the Christian Church, incongruous? Not in youth. It would be to see the General Conference of the Methodist Church or the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church doing that. But youth has certain rights of exuberance and expression denied age. Yet for all its winsomeness, for all its energy and effervescence which we do not want to see depart from youth, the exuberant spirit of youth is not the abundant life. Life ought to grow more abundant as the years pass; true life does grow more abundant with the passing of time.

Nor is the abundant life found in the possession of many things. We spend our time and money in getting together things, many things. How things accumulate! Our cellars and garrets exist largely to take care of the over-accumulation of things. We treasure these things so that when we have discarded them we do not like to get rid of them. We are so wedded to some things in our garrets that only death can us part. Things at their best are only temporary. They wear out. They get out of style and out of date. They are perishable. I tried to fix up an old chair the other day. It was once a very substantial chair. It now has a very substan-

tial look, but its looks deceive. One cannot sit down in it without exercising some degree of caution. I tried to fix it up, but I succeeded rather poorly; still I cling to the chair; it is one of our human frailties to cling to things. If the possession of many things constituted the abundant life, then he would have the most abundant life who has the greatest number of homes — summer home, winter home, spring home, and autumn home; who has in these homes the most lavish amount of furniture; whose garages are filled with the most automobiles; who belongs to the greatest number of clubs; who has the greatest number of books in his library, though he never opens them. But that is not so; the possession of many things is not the abundant life. Nor is the abundant life the fast life. We live in a speedy age. All life is speeded up. A few days ago a Chicago business man had two engagements, one in the afternoon to play golf, another in the evening to take his children to an entertainment. That is all right, one says. Any man should be able to do that. Yes, but those two engagements were three hundred miles apart. He kept them both. He played golf with his friends at a country club three hundred miles from Chicago, took an airplane, flew to Chicago, and kept his promise to take his children to the evening entertainment. Now all that is very interesting, but I would not call that abundant life. An integral part of our age of speed is the age of comfort and con-

venience. An old salt of the sea could hardly believe his ears when the captain of a great modern ship said to him, "You know where San Francisco is?" "Yes, indeed, on the west coast of the States." "Well, do you know that you can travel all the way from San Francisco to London without once getting from under cover? You can get in a train at the station in San Francisco, step out in the New York station, take a taxi from a covered shed, get out at a covered pier, walk up a sheltered gangplank to the ship, embark at Southampton, enter a special train which stands waiting under the shed, speed to London, step into a taxi at the covered station, and go to your hotel, over six thousand miles in eleven days, and all without a single break in the overhead covering." That is all most interesting, and belongs to our modern life of speed and convenience, but I would hardly call that the abundant life. Jesus knew none of these modern machines of speed, yet none will deny that he knew whereof he spoke when he said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

What then is the abundant life and how can we attain unto it? If it cannot be told in terms of the conveniences, comforts, and luxuries of a rich and progressive civilization, how are we to know it and how are we to experience it? In the first place, the abundant life is made up of *abundant thoughts.* "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" is a

statement we have long accepted at its face value. If one's heart thinks abundant thoughts, his life will be an abundant life. We are privileged to have many thoughts. There is no limit placed upon the number of thoughts we may have. Our thoughts should be like the sands on the seashore and the stars in the sky, without number. In thoughts we are the richest people that ever lived. Paul once reminded the Corinthians to whom he was writing, and who seemed a bit sensitive about what things they could rightfully claim, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death; all things are yours." If Paul and his associates could claim all things as theirs, so too may we; if they were rich, how much richer are we! We have the heritage of nineteen centuries which Paul did not have. What thoughts, what beautiful thoughts, what clear thoughts, what mighty thoughts have come into being since Paul walked the paths of this world! What added, worth-while thoughts have come into being since you and I were born! We cannot afford to be content with the thoughts of our childhood. We must not be lazy in our thinking, being satisfied with one or two thoughts, refusing to think because it is hard work to think. When we do that we cut down life, for the abundant life is made up of abundant thoughts, numberless thoughts—abundant thoughts in the sense not only of the number of thoughts, but in the size of the thoughts. Our

thoughts must be large thoughts if we are to enjoy the abundant life. Large thoughts enlarge life, small thoughts shrivel life. In no realm of life are small thoughts more shriveling than in the realm of religion—or more disheartening. If we cannot think large thoughts in our religious life, how can we hope to think large thoughts in our political or social life! We are thinking larger thoughts than ever in our religious life. We have not quite come up to the large thoughts of Christ, but we are drawing near. Then there are abundant thoughts in the sense of long thoughts. Think for to-day; yes, and think for next year; and think for one hundred years hence. Live one day at a time, and a century too. If the soul is immortal, then thoughts are immortal. We will live the abundant life because we think abundantly. No one can tie us down to little thoughts. We may be limited in the money we have to spend, but not in the thoughts we have to think; we are rich, we are millionaires in abundant thoughts.

The abundant life means something else: it means *abundant enthusiasm.* It is a sad day when one loses his enthusiasm for life, or for the interests of life. It is the sure sign of old age. What is the certain sign of old age? Not the number of years one has lived, but his waning enthusiasms of life. Many a person is old at thirty, while others are young at seventy. He is old who has lost his enthusiasm of life. In Dante's "Inferno"

he asks his guide in the lower regions why certain people are present. "These men," says Dante to his guide, "are not dead, they are still alive in the city of Florence; why, it was only yesterday I saw them as I walked along the street." "No, you are mistaken," replies the guide; "they are dead, they have been dead these many years. What you saw in Florence yesterday was their bodies; their souls have been dead a long time, that is why you see them here." Youth is not a matter of years, it is a matter of enthusiasm; he is young, whatever his age, who keeps his enthusiasm for life, and retains his interest in some great and good cause.

Again, the abundant life means *abundant harmony.* It means taking the many interests of life and blending them into one harmonious whole. It is what is known in musical terms as "counterpoint." Counterpoint is the ability to take two or three tunes and run them together, so blending them that they make one harmonious whole, yet the musical ear is able to discern and pick out the separate tunes. Thus Wagner wrote his great and beautiful opera "The Meistersinger." In this he weaves together not the conventional two or three, but four tunes into one counterpoint. Life is like that. Life is made up of such varied and often diverse interests. Some of the problems which you face in your daily work seem at the other end of the pole from the peace and the quiet of the

sanctuary; some of the interests of your home seem far from identical with the interests of the community. We open our daily paper and see spread out before us the clashing news of a strange world, good and evil, the false and true side by side in the columns. Then we turn and go out into the world of which we have been reading, the world of clashing interests. He who can counterpoint is the one who wins; he who can take these different tunes and blend them into one harmonious whole, he lives the abundant life.

But the abundant life is more than philosophy. it is more than richness of thoughts, or boundless enthusiasm, or a perfection of harmony; the abundant life is a comradeship, lived in company with the Son of God. *I* am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. You can find the abundant life in no other way. Be not deceived. It is not found in wide travel, or much reading, or many friends and acquaintances, or varied interests; these are but contributory to the one great central truth: the abundant life is found in daily fellowship with Christ.

XI

A GOOD RULE FOR EVERY HOUSE

A GOOD RULE FOR EVERY HOUSE

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!

Study to be quiet, do your own business, work with your own hands.
1 Thessalonians 4: 11

AN old verger of Westminster Abbey, conducting a small group of us through the Abbey, took us down into the old Norman Crypt. He paused before one of the numerous memorials and remarked of the man whose name was there commemorated, "That man passed through many, many troubles; troubles he might well have avoided had he kept to his own business." "By the way," he continued, "we had a sermon in the Abbey last Sunday on that very subject. The preacher took no text, he simply talked about each person attending to his own business. And a right good sermon it was. I have heard some good preaching in this old Abbey in the fifty years I have been a verger, but I have never heard a sermon quite like that one of last Sunday. It was so practical. We need more sermons like that. We would get along much better if we each one would mind his own business." So the kindly, practical old verger sowed a seed in the mind of at least one person. Many months have passed since then; it has taken

all this time for that seed to come to fruit; the fruit is upon the pages you are now reading.

Mind your own business, despite the verger's enthusiasm for it, is not a particularly winsome phrase. It repels us. At the same time it draws us. It is sharp, but it does its work. Not all things that fulfill their mission are lovely. A thunderstorm is not lovely, but it does its work, it fulfills its mission. Nothing clears the air on a sultry midsummer day like a thunderstorm. The pain caused by the dentist's instrument, or the cut of the surgeon's knife, is not pleasant, but often necessary. There are many things in life that are not pleasant, but necessary. This rule touches our language and figures of speech. Mind your own business is by no means a pleasant phrase; no, not pleasant, but necessary. It fits into the life and need of to-day as it fitted into the need and life of Paul's day. Phrases like this require a definition. What is our business? we ask. I have a fourfold answer.

First, each one of us is to mind his *own* business. Charity, we say, begins at home. So, too, does the matter of attending to one's own affairs. We must regulate our own affairs before we attempt to regulate the affairs of the universe. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city," reads the ancient proverb. It might well read: He that cannot rule his own spirit has no right to venture outside his own yard and as-

sume to control the affairs of a city. Now one's business may be clearly told in two well-worn watchwords; one's own business consists in making a living and making a life. It consists in making a living. Do you know that this is precisely what the Apostle is writing about as he pens this letter of the Christians in Thessalonica! He is saying to them, "Study to be quiet; do your own business; work with your own hands, that you may walk honestly before men, and that you may lack nothing." In other words, your business is to make a living. One of the first marks of a Christian is that he is able to care for himself. Unless grave illness, great misfortune, or the infirmities of age prevent, every true Christian is able to care for himself, does care for himself. It is one of the first and most practical tests of the Christian religion. Poverty is bad enough in Christian lands, but it is a thousand times worse in lands that are not Christian. Our religion wins out in the plain, everyday, practical test; Christ enables a man to make a living. A sinful man, a menace to and a drag upon society, when truly converted, turns over a new leaf and starts out to make a living. He is no longer a charge upon society; he minds his own business. Minding one's *own* business includes making a life as well as a living. 'Twere a low ideal indeed if one were in the world only to make a living. Making a living has a twin brother; that is, making a life. One may "keep his nose to the grindstone"

and make a living, and save and hoard, but that is not making a life. What do you do outside your working hours? How do you spend your leisure? What is your influence in the place where you work? What influence have you outside that place? What does your name stand for when it is spoken by friends or acquaintances? Do you possess the richness of character as well as a balance at the bank? These are the test questions which fairly slap one in the face as he contemplates the subject of minding his own business. We cannot escape it: minding one's *own* business is making a living and making a life.

Our definition of attending to one's own affairs has a second interpretation: it means minding our *children's* business. Do not imagine that because you have no children you are immune. In some respects your responsibility is greater than the responsibility of those who have children, at least it is as great. The Saviour had no children of his own, but he took all children within the circle of his love and consideration. Children are not only an asset or liability of the individual home where they live; they are an asset or liability of the community. Margaret Slattery tells of walking along the street one day when she heard a little voice say, "Hello, Miss Slattery." She looked around, but saw no one. Again she heard the little voice. She looked everywhere, but still saw no one. Then she heard, "Keep a-lookin' up, Miss Slattery." She

looked up and up, and finally in a high window of a tenement house she saw the little girl, who said, "You didn't see me, Miss Slattery, 'cause you didn't look high enough." The children are not down here "under our feet," as some people exasperatingly say; they are up here, on the level of our consideration; their business is our business. Children become a liability when we do not mind their business. The problem of the child is not so much the problem of the child as it is the problem of the home and the school, the parents and the teachers. He who has anything to do with children, who performs his duty solely as a matter of duty, irksome duty at that, something to be done with as quickly as possible, is helping, by that attitude or irksomeness, to make children a liability rather than an asset. Children become an asset as we look after them, when we make their business our business. Fifteen years ago a prosperous business concern built a factory in the crowded section of Buffalo. The neighborhood swarmed with boys. The factory suffered many losses from their depredations; they could not refrain from the time-honored custom of throwing stones at the factory windows just to hear the crash of glass. There were other depredations quite as serious, so that frequently the police were called in to aid the owners in protecting their property. What were those boys to do—they had no other place to play! The problem was not their

problem, it was the older folks' problem. Then a Boys' Club was started in that community, well planned, well conducted. The hundreds of boys who used to swarm the streets now swarm the club. The result? By the written testimony of the police captain of that precinct, and of the president of that particular factory, thoughtless depredations have practically ceased. The boys are an asset rather than a liability. Wherever you set down a church, and that church has connected with it a Sunday school, well conducted, well manned, and well womaned, the tone of the child life of that immediate community is at once changed for the better. A distinguished judge of the Brooklyn bench, out of years of experience, said that in all his service as judge he had never had brought before him, charged with crime, a boy who had been a member of any Sunday school. Our business is to mind the children's business. One day in Glasgow a woman was observed by a policeman to pick something from the sidewalk and hide it in her apron. He accosted her and asked her what she had found (suspecting it was something valuable that did not belong to her); she refused to tell him. He insisted, and somewhat in confusion she opened her apron and he saw there several bits of sharp, broken glass. Hastily she explained her strange act: "You see, sir, the bairns play barefoot these hot days and I was afraid the glass would cut their feet." Blessed woman! Picking up the

broken glass. That is what we are to do, for the bairns' business is our business.

Again, we are to mind our *neighbor's* business. That does not sound well, does it? I hope I may make it sound well. "Who is my neighbor?" The lawyer's question is pertinent. A man, minding his own business, was on his journey. It was a lonely way. Suddenly, from their hiding place, men who wanted to get something for nothing leaped upon him, struck him to the ground, took his money, and left. A little later a man came that way, saw the poor stricken fellow on the ground; he said to himself, "It is none of my business," and passed on. A second man came that way. He paused a moment. He seemed to be debating with himself. Finally the evil in him won, for he tossed his head in the air, gestured to his unseen audience, and spoke aloud, "Oh, these things happen; it is none of my business," and was on his way. A third man came that way; was amazed to find a stricken man in so public a place, hastened to his side, carefully lifted him into his auto, sped to the hospital and said, "I do not know what happened to this man, but something has happened; care for him; I will see to the pay if he cannot." A neighbor is a man in need. Color, race, locality, wealth, or poverty do not enter into the case at all. My neighbor's business means my neighbor's well-being. The well-being of our community is our business. Turning the pages, a few

days since, of that most interesting book, "Jefferson and Hamilton," by Claude Bowers, I read the story of a fever which attacked Philadelphia in the early years of our country's history. Physicians fought, but they fought blindly. The only remedy they knew was to bleed a person. That was the remedy all but universally applied. The foul-smelling docks, the unclean sections of the city never seemed to enter their heads as the cause of the plague. People fled from the city. Streets were deserted. The death toll mounted into hundreds and thousands. The government, which had set in Philadelphia, refused to return to the city and chose Germantown instead. A plague like that is impossible to-day, even in our much larger, more congested cities. Why? Because there are Boards of Health in every city whose business it is to mind their neighbor's business, to look after the community well-being. The well-being of our nation is our business. Our whole system of government is built upon the idea of minding our neighbor's business. The President in Washington is not attending to his own business: he is attending to the nation's business. Our legislatures, our courts are all assembled for the purpose of minding our neighbor's business. Here is the ideal of democracy, and a good one it is, our neighbor's business, the nation's well-being. Certain groups resent the Eighteenth Amendment as none of the nation's business. It is the nation's business, for

when it is proved that a thing is against the well-being of the citizens of the nation it is the nation's business to intervene. Amendment or no amendment, the fact still stands, the chief cause of crime and poverty, filth and hardship, wrecked lives and broken homes is liquor. That business is the nation's business. Community, nation, world, the world's well-being is our business. To-day Buffalo is nearer Shanghai than New York was to Philadelphia one hundred years ago. What is transpiring in China to-day is our business. Not our business to interfere, but to intercede. Not the business of big guns, but the business of true brotherhood. China belongs to China. America belongs to America. But China and America both belong to humanity and humanity is one the world round. Restraint is what we need when we deal with our brothers across the sea or across the border —restraint until we know the facts; restraint that shall enable us to help them out rather than wipe them out. Such progress as the nations have made in the comparatively brief history of humanity has been made because of the men and women who, actuated by the spirit of truth and brotherhood, have minded their neighbor's business: Assisi, Savonarola, Luther, Zwingli, Knox, Wesley, Wilberforce, Columbus, Lafayette, Gordon, Lincoln, Joan of Arc, Florence Nightingale, Frances Willard, Mother Booth—the list is a long and glorious one. At the mention of every name we sincerely

thank God for those who truly serve him by serving the well-being of their neighbors.

There is one final word about minding our own business. That is, we are to mind our *Father's* business. One of the most stirring little books—it is a little book, it can be read in an hour—is Wilfred Grenfell's recent testimony which he has put in book form, "What Christ Means to Me." Dr. Grenfell was brought up in the conventional form in England, his native country. In school, church, and everywhere he was taught to do the conventional thing. He united with the Established Church of England, at fourteen years, entered the communicant's class and partook of his first communion, because it was the conventional thing to do. Every other boy of his class and age did the same thing. So on through all his early training and habits he did the conventional thing. He rebelled somewhat, but went through. I am inclined to think all those conventional things did him more good than he is willing to admit. Anyway, in his experience, light came to him, Christian joy and the exhilaration of the fray when, in the London City Hospital as an interne, brought face to face with the terrible sufferings caused by drink and sordid sin, he was able to see himself doing his Father's business, working for Christ, in those hand-to-hand conflicts, his close contacts with the Father's needy children. Wilfred Grenfell is honorable and honored before the world to-day be-

cause through nearly fifty years of unselfish service he has been able to honestly testify, "I have been doing my Father's business; that is what Christ means to me." I am sure there comes to your mind that strange, unusual, yet wholly natural and beautiful incident of the Temple. Jesus, a lad of twelve, tarried in the Temple. Sought by the distracted Mary and Joseph, he answered their surprised exclamation, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business!" Blessed lad! How greatly we need the lesson you have taught! Our heavenly Father's business. That is our business.

XII

FOES WITHIN THE HOUSE

FOES WITHIN THE HOUSE

THEY OF HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD

A man's foes shall be they of his own household.
Matthew 10: 36

IT is hard to think that one's own household may harbor foes rather than friends; that one must be on guard within the sacred precincts of his family circle; that the place which should furnish the most confident security is instead fraught with threatening danger. It scarcely conforms with the household of memory. My boyhood household contained friends, not foes. I am as certain as I am certain of anything that my father and mother were my best friends, that they never wished me ill, but well. I am quite as confident that my sister, though we may have had our brother-and-sister, boy-and-girl quarrels, was as good a friend as I had in my boyhood days. Nor is this verse consonant with present experience. Your house has a friendly atmosphere. Certainly this verse does not agree with the home of the future. Any young man or young woman who is planning a home fully expects and intends that such a home shall be "Home, sweet home," the abode of friends, not foes. But here it is, just as it fell from the lips of Jesus, a hard saying in the midst of hard sayings: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Of course, to understand a saying like this one must look at the setting, he must read the verses that lead up to it and the verses that follow. He must scan the whole theme as well as the one sentence. Let us do that now. Jesus is here talking about the importance, difficulty, and rewards of the work his disciples are called to do. He has called to his side the twelve disciples and sent them forth to that work. But before they go he talks with them, telling them what they are to do, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils, preach the gospel. He tells them where they are to go, to the lost sheep, to the needy ones. He tells them how they are to act, to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. He tells them what they are to expect, opposition, hatred, persecution; not only from those who are without, from those in whom they might naturally expect enmity, but also from their friends and relatives, even from their own household—father arrayed against son, and daughter against mother. Often righteousness meets the most determined and spiteful opposition within its own ranks. Such is the truth to which Jesus here gives utterance. This sentence has another application. It stands alone, entirely apart from its setting. It is literally true that a man's foes are they of his own household. Let us inquire into this matter in four realms in which we live and move and have our being.

First, the *State*. In government what do we

have most to fear, the foes without or within? Long, long ago there was a nation in the making. They were advancing, achieving progress from year to year. But they were still in the wilderness state, wandering through a barren, unproductive land, groping their way as a nation. Ahead of them was a land of promise, a land that rightly belonged to them, in which they could dwell, rear families, and build a government. Moses, the leader of this new and groping nation, sent twelve picked men up into the new country to ascertain its qualities, soil, fruits, people, and possibilities. These twelve men, after forty days of careful investigation, returned with glowing reports on their lips of that new land. Their unanimous verdict was, "It is indeed a land flowing with milk and honey." As proof of their report they brought a huge cluster of grapes, and to this day Eshcol grapes remain the synonym for sweetness and lusciousness. They brought back with them also pomegranates and figs. But of those twelve men ten said, "It is a great and productive land, but the people there are giants, large of stature, vicious of temperament; they would devour us and consume us as a fire consumes dry timber." Only two of the twelve stood up and said, "Courage, courage, let us go up and possess the land!" Now who were the enemies of Israel long ago? Were the enemies the Amorites and Hittites and all the other tribesmen who were about them, or were

they the ten men within the inner circle of Israel who were afraid? A nation's foes shall be they of its own houshold. Our own nation has had so brief a history, that we are able to reach out and place the finger upon the point of our beginnings. Reach out, will you, and put your finger upon a little village down in Chester County, Pennsylvania, the village of Valley Forge. Now remove your finger from that place and put it upon a date, 1777; it is winter. The Continental army, if army it may be called, George Washington, commander, has been driven out of Philadelphia and is wintering in Valley Forge. The men live in huts built with their own hands. They suffer for lack of food and clothing. For shoes many of them wrap old rags about their feet. Washington appeals to the Continental Congress to do something to help his starving, shivering army, but he appeals in vain. Food and clothing are in Philadelphia, but the commissary department is so incompetent that the supplies remain piled up all winter in the city while in Valley Forge the soldiers suffer, sicken, and die. Now who were the real foes of our infant, struggling nation? Not the well-fed, warmly-clothed British soldiers in Philadelphia, but the indifferent, incompetent groups within the national circle. A nation's foes shall be they of its own household. During the World War there was a widespread, closely organized espionage to root out the foes within our own household. Who are

the chief foes of the United States to-day? Not any other nation, nor any combination of nations, in Europe, Asia, or South America. The foes we have to fear are within our own household. The chief foe of America is the man who picks and chooses the laws of the land he shall keep and the laws he shall break; the man who makes himself and his pigmy judgment greater than the majority vote of the people, who sets himself above the Supreme Court, who laughs at the palladium of our liberties. Yes, Jesus was speaking for our own day and our own United States when he said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

In the second place there is the *Church.* The Church has much to contend with, has had from the days of Pentecost. There was the ancient city of Corinth. Corinth the learned, Corinth the beautiful, Corinth the commercially important, Corinth the rich; in the second century of the Christian era Corinth was the wealthiest city of all Greece; Corinth from whose architects and builders rose a distinctive type, the Corinthian, persisting to this day. Now in Corinth was a little band of disciples, gathered together and taught by Paul. They were neither learned nor rich, but they were distinct, they stood out in the life of the city, against the gross immoralities of their day and generation. That little band of Christians in ancient Corinth did not have all smooth sailing. There were storms, there was

trouble. But who were their chief foes? Not the great, rich, unsympathetic, opposing population which surrounded them; not the pagan life and doctrine that bombarded their eyes and ears; their chief foes were in their own household. Witness Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. What is that? It is his plea with them not to quarrel among themselves, not to debate about nonessentials, to leave off fleshy lusts, to discipline themselves, their bodies as well as their minds. Yes, a church's foes shall be they of their own household. Think of our great Christian denominations. What do they have most to fear? Who are their chief foes? Not the sin and unbelief of the world at large; there is a sure remedy for that. But their chief foes are they of their own household. A distrust of one another, a gathering into factions and groups, wrangling and controverting about debatable and minor doctrines, while ever above them is Christ the Saviour, to whom they should ever look, in whose exaltation all ambitions and differences may safely be lost. Jesus spoke of the Church of all times when he said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household."

In the third place we lay the length of this measure down upon the *Home*. No one will deny the fact that the most significant, the most important institution from the beginning of time has been the home. No homes, no nation; no homes, no church. The home is the pivot upon which revolve

all human interests, all human success or failure. Once upon a time there was a home in which there were two boys. There were probably other children, but we are particularly concerned with these two boys. Their names were Cain and Abel. We are not concerned now about the kind of house they lived in; it may have been a crude dwelling or it may have been a substantial structure. Nor are we perturbed about their surroundings, the ferocious beasts that probably inhabited the near-by forests, the conditions of hardship under which they labored for their daily bread. The most perverse, adverse conditions that surrounded them were as nothing compared with the spirit that prevailed within their home. That early home of Cain and Abel long, long ago was wrecked because of a jealous spirit in the heart of Cain. From that day to this it has been written indelibly upon the dwelling of men, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." What is it that breaks up a home to-day? Not any outside influence or enemy. A man's home is his castle, and if there is unanimity and agreement, loyalty and love within the castle, there is no assault from the outside that can batter down the walls of that castle. But when distrust creeps in, when the chief loyalty is transferred from the home to some outside interest, when love grows cold, the subtle foe within the household undermines the foundations and shatters the roof timbers. What does the American home

have most to fear? Not a mortgage on the house; that may be paid off in time. Not a changing neighborhood; all neighborhoods change. Not poor city government or low civic ideals; governments come and go and civic ideals may be lifted. The American home has most to fear the moral looseness, the spiritual coldness, the lowered ideals within its own circle, for "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." The young people whom we launch upon life's great adventure beginning at the marriage altar have nothing to fear if they claim for their very own the vision of the old family hymn,

> "O happy home, where two in heart united
> In holy faith and blessed hope are one."

Finally, there is *one's own life.* One of the classic phrases of individual experience and personal redemption is Paul's sentence, "A thorn in the flesh." He says: "There was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me." Exactly what that thorn in the flesh was we do not know. We do know that it was something within his own life. Again he testified, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." The great Apostle's chief foes were not the doubters on Mars' Hill, nor the scoffers of Damascus, nor the proud guards of the Roman prison, nor the haughty looks of the men of the Sanhedrin, nor the cruel high priest Ananias, nor the curiosity-seeking Felix

and his wife Drusilla—these and a thousand other individuals and influences that opposed him were not his chief enemies. He faced them with a fearless front, a pure courage unafraid. The foe he feared most, the foe he had to conquer, the foe he did conquer was within his own life. It is as true now as then, as certain in your life as in the life of the Apostle, a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Truth is like a coin: there are two sides. The statement is true. But the statement is a coin that has another side. Turn it over and what do you read? A man's *friends* shall be they of his own household. And there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. By the miracle of the spiritual realm Christ, the Saviour, takes up his abode in the individual life. He who has Christ has everything, conquers all things, is triumphant over every foe.

XIII

THE HOUSE DURING PERIODS OF HARDSHIP

THE HOUSE DURING PERIODS OF HARDSHIP

ENDURE HARDNESS!

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.
2 Timothy 2: 3

"TAKE your share of hardness," is the motto found on the desk of the editor of the *British Weekly*. Many mottoes adorn many desks. "Do it now;" "Time is money, do not waste it;" "Smile;" such mottoes may be recalled, *ad infinitum*. Most of them are good, deserving the prominence given them. Most of them, also, have reference to the hustle and bustle of life. They refer to those qualities which make for success, or seeming success, in business. Here is a motto entirely new under the sun for a desk motto: Take your share of hardness.

Endure is the word the Apostle uses. Endure, not in the sense of resignation. "Oh, I expect I'll have to endure it." Nor in the sense of patience. "Yes, I'll endure it." Endure rather in the sense of continuing, refusing to run away, "staying by the stuff," to use an Old Testament phrase. James Moffatt, in his modern translation of the New Testament, put it on an even higher level; he lifts

it to the level of choice. His translation reads, "Join the ranks of those who bear suffering." He sees two armies marching. One army is made up of the shirkers, the soft, flabby cushion hunters. The other army is composed of those whose faces are resolutely set toward life and life's obligations. Pointing to those two armies, he says, "Join the ranks of those who bear suffering."

Hardship is part of the luggage of life. F. W. Boreham has a book called "The Luggage of Life." He begins by saying that "Life is largely a matter of luggage. So soon as a child can toddle he displays an insatiable desire for carrying things. He is never so happy as when he is lugging something about." This trait marks every age. We are bearers of burdens, carriers of loads, and much as we grumble about it we would be lost without the luggage of life. In school we were taught that every square inch of surface has to sustain fifteen pounds of weight; we were told that each of us is subjected to a weight of no less than fourteen tons. H. G. Wells pictures two men relieved of this atmospheric pressure. They cannot control themselves. Losing their load they almost lose their lives. Taking a step, they spring into the air. Jumping over an obstacle, they soar into space and land on some distant cliff or alight on an extinct volcano. It is a true picture of life. We need the luggage to hold us steady. Hardship is a part of the luggage of life. Therefore

take your share of hardness. I have in mind two observations.

My first observation is that the easy way is an easy way, but it gets nowhere. Margot Asquith, in her autobiography, tells of one of her customary early morning walks passing a field in which she saw a group of tramps emerging from a haystack, casually brushing the particles of hay and dust from their clothes and hair before sauntering on their way. She wondered about them, what their plans for the day were, just how they determined what they should do or where they should go on any given day. So she stopped and spoke to them. "Tell me," she inquired, "how you decide each morning which direction you shall take?" "That ain't hard to answer," replied the spokesman of the group, "you see, lady, we usually start out in the morning with the wind at our back." How true it is everywhere! The people who usually walk with the wind at their back, who take the easy way! It is a temptation to young people in school to take the easy way—to do just enough to "get by." Consequently there has to be a weeding-out process, and one by one they drop out all along the way, because it is easier to drop out than to continue. It is a temptation to take the easy way in our daily work. How few of us really "buckle down" to our task! It is so easy to do just sufficient to warrant the size of our pay envelope or monthly check, and let the rest slip. Certainly we

travel with the wind at our back when it comes to our religious life. Take the mere matter of church attendance, which is one of the primary tests of a person's interest in religion. A big percentage of Protestant people make church attendance a matter of convenience. On Monday morning they say, "I have so and so to do to-day, I am to be at my work at such and such a time," there is no question whatever about following the schedule of that day. Likewise Tuesday, Wednesday, right through the week, until Sunday. Sunday morning arrives: "What is the day? How's the weather out? Oh, I'm tired, I guess I'll stay at home to-day." The easy way gets to be a habit until all interest in the religious life is held by a single thread, and a weak one at that, the thread of memory, or the thread of nominal Church membership. H. K. Carroll, that wizard of statistics with reference to the religious bodies of the United States, has recently been telling us of the disheartening losses which the churches of the country suffer annually because people move from one place to another, neglecting in their new home to establish any church connection; they have gone from the old church, they are lost to that church; they have not entered the church in their new home, they are a loss to that church; they are a loss to the church universal, they themselves are losers thereby. It is the sad story of the easy way.

My second observation is that the hard way is a

hard way, but it arrives. It has a goal and it reaches that goal. Booker T. Washington's mother was a slave, he never knew exactly who his father was, and in his earlier life he was denied those privileges of education commonly given to white boys. He was compelled to walk the hard, hard way; he walked it and arrived; few have equaled, none has surpassed his service to the people of his race. Steiner of Grinnell is a product of that conglomeration of races and religions in Southeastern Europe, not a very promising field. He came to this country in the steerage as an immigrant; he faced the hard, hard way; he walked it and arrived, for no man of this generation has rendered finer service to the immigrant and to the country in solving the country's problems of the immigrant than Steiner of Grinnell. When one reckons up recorded history, a high place must be given the book "A Short History of the English People" by J. R. Green. Green was rector of a small parish in England, spending on his schools and the poor all his income from the parish, sitting up nights and writing to provide for his own necessities. He had a consuming ambition to write a history of his people; it was a hard task; he bent to his task, writing through years with a body racked with pain, but he arrived. The world's estimate of him is recorded on his tombstone, "He died learning." The hard way is the necessary test of true character. At Columbia University

there is a very interesting little building whose sole purpose is to test fireproof flooring materials. The floor to be tested is built into this building as a roof. "Under it is built a fierce fire, averaging 1,700 degrees Fahrenheit, sometimes reaching 2,000. This is kept up for four hours, while delicate instruments measure the heat of the floor and its sagging under a load of pig iron, 150 pounds to the square foot. Then water is turned on the floor, and after the floor has cooled a weight of 600 pounds to the square foot is placed upon it. If it stands this tremendous test, the floor system is approved. Many floors have stood it." Character is the outcome of the hard test.

> "Life is not as idle ore,
> But iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use."

The difference in character is right here. The difference is not so much in people as it is in the way they take the test. Some can stand it; and some, alas, go down under it. There is in Thucydides a sentence both illuminating and heartening. The sentence is, "We should remember that man differs little from man, except that he turns out best who is trained in the sharpest school." Shall we freely admit this truth in our general outlook upon life but rule it out of our religion? Shall we say, "I recognize that the hard way creates

character, achieves, arrives; I welcome it in my daily life, but I do not want any of it in my religion"? We cannot be true to the New Testament and say that. "Blessed is the man"—what man is blessed? Read on, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." "Who are these," asks John in the Revelation, "these who are distinguished by their white robes?" "Don't you know? These are they who have come the easy way"—no, no, "these are they who have come up the hard way, through great tribulation, and have washed their robes and *made* them white in the blood of the Lamb." We cannot be true to Christ and refuse the hard way. Some one has said that the most significant verse in the New Testament is the one that reads, "He set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." What was at Jerusalem? Gethsemane; Pilate's hall; mockings; scourgings; misunderstandings; the crown of thorns; the ignominious Cross—all these were at Jerusalem, yet "Jesus set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem." Then I read, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

"Sure I must fight, if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word."

The hard way is a hard way, but it arrives.

Now to these two observations let me add two brief exhortations. For the truth is not completed in the opening statement, "Thou therefore endure hardness." How? "As a good soldier of Jesus Christ." And how does a good soldier of Jesus Christ endure hardness?

First, serenely. That is, uncomplainingly, without whining. Much of the joy in facing hardship is in doing so with a serene spirit. Jesus walked his hard way serenely. When he announced to the Twelve, "One of you shall betray me," I do not see that there was any bitterness in his voice; rather there was wistful, disappointing sadness, "One of you shall betray me." When he was reviled, he reviled not again. What one word characterizes Jesus as he stands before Pilate and the threatening mob? Serenity. Can you take your share of hardness serenely? Here is a man who is broken in health before his time. Once he could come and go at will; his active body was sufficient for every need and responded eagerly to every call. His joy of life was in living. But suddenly he was stricken, and now he who once went everywhere, wherever fancy dictated, must confine his travels to a very limited space, the space within his own home; the world is a world of three or four rooms. He still has many friends, but if he sees those friends they must come to him; he cannot go to them. It is a hard, hard way, but he endures it serenely. Here is another man who was

once prosperous. All things went well with him. Many things he touched turned to money. He was looking ahead to a life, not of ease and luxury, but a life of contentment free from the worries of want. But to him, as to Job of old, came sudden reverses. He cannot live in the style he once could well afford. He cannot give the support to the philanthropic enterprises of the community he once was glad to give. Many little extras he used to provide for his family and friends he can no longer provide. It is a hard, hard way he is called to walk, but he walks it without whining, never a word of complaint or bitterness, and we admire him more in his poverty than in his plenty because of his serenity. Or, let us look a little deeper into the home. Here is a home where the dreamed-of happiness does not exist. Something is there; it may be a moral wrong, or it may be something entirely different, anyway the home is not the haven of happiness it once was. It is a hard way, but they of the home walk it. They do not drag their story through the courts and the press, flaunting their unhappiness before the public; they walk their hard way serenely, and we love them for it.

Second, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus—that is, *believingly*. Believing that it is for some good. This is one glorious thing about Job. He could not understand why he should be so afflicted. It baffled him, but he knew this: it must be for some good. Paul was given a thorn in the

flesh. What that thorn was we do not know. But we do know that it was for some good. Paul said, and he said it twice in almost the same breath, that the thorn was given me "lest I should be exalted over measure." That was for his good. Therefore endure hardness with this confidence, that good will come out of it. There are some heartening words in the Book that we do well often to recall; not only to recall, but always to believe. Namely, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to his purpose." In my own experience one of the best things that ever happened to me was a bump I received; not a bump on the head, but a bump to my ambition. It was a keen disappointment, but blessing and good grew out of it. I can see it now; I could not then. As "The Lady of the Decoration" says at the close of her story, "I do not regret the past, for through it the present is. All the loneliness, the heartaches, and the pains are justified now. I believe that while I have been struggling out here in Japan God has restored to me the years the locust had eaten, and that I shall be permitted to return to a new life, a life given back by God." It was written of Jesus that "he learned obedience through the things which he suffered." So I am determined to learn obedience through joy or pain, to take my share of hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

XIV

THE HOUSE REPAIRED

THE HOUSE REPAIRED

I WILL RESTORE THE YEARS

I will restore the years that the locust hath eaten.
Joel 2: 25

IF you desire a picture of complete, clean-swept devastation, look upon a field that has been visited by a swarm of locusts. Nothing is left but stripped stalks, naked trees, and barren fields. A swarm of locusts has even been known to scrape a weather-beaten board fence. Locusts travel in swarms, millions in a swarm. They descend upon fields and farms, and when they are done not a shred of fruit or leaf is left. The prophet Joel likens the flight of locusts to "the noise of the flame that devoureth the stubble," and the land through which they pass "as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness." This picture of a land laid waste by an invading army of locusts has only one counterpart—that is, a life laid waste by sin. Complaint is sometimes made that we no longer hear sermons about sin, that it has passed out of fashion to preach against sin and about deliverance from sin. Even if such a complaint were true, which it is not, what need is there to *hear* sermons about sin when we can *see* them everywhere, lives whose years the locusts have eaten? The prodigal, spending foolishly the money he had not earned, con-

sorting with harlots, companioning with swine, feeding on husks, his silken garments now become filthy rags, is a vivid picture of one whose years the locust hath eaten. There are many like him. All prodigals do not wear the label of prodigal. Many prodigals are still well clothed and well fed, still move in good society with a fair name, but the locusts have eaten their years; they know it, God knows it, and time will tell. Time is an honest old man. He was never yet known to play false to his trust. Time cannot be bribed; he is the soul of honor. Time cannot be bought. Every man may have his price, but here is one old soul who cannot be bought. Time cannot be bargained with. Time does not have one price for one customer and another price for another. Time is not an Oriental shopkeeper who purposely sets a high price expecting the customer to haggle, plead, and bargain and then come down to that price. Time has one price and he says to every customer, "Take it or leave it." Many other things make up the swarm of locusts which consume the years of human life. Sorrow, poverty, loss of property, loss of friends, hardship, business reverses, mistakes, foolish, careless, or greedy investments, sickness, accident, broken health, these are a part of the swarm of locusts which eat up the years of human life and, in moments of despondency and tears, lead one to ask the question, "Who can give back the years we have lost?"

Now there is a great and abiding truth of God and life—namely, the truth of *Restoration.* I will restore the years the locust hath eaten, is the assurance of the eternal God. This particular word was spoken to Israel. After Israel had been lashed by her enemies; by plagues, drought, and crop-failures; by her own recklessness and waywardness, then God appeared to Israel in the hour of her despair and said, "Listen, my people, I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten." This assurance spoken to Israel belongs to all of life; it is an abiding, eternal truth, the truth of restoration. The word spoken by the prophet Joel in the Old Testament is matched by the word of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." There are four laws to the realization of this great truth of restoration.

The first is the law of *Repentance.* Israel cannot be restored to a new national life until she repents of her old national mistakes. One cannot realize a new life in Christ until he repents of his old life in sin. This first law of restoration is true in every part of our experience. It is true of the body and health. If one's health is not what it should be, if one does not have the physical strength and joy he may reasonably expect to have for one of his years, the essential, absolutely necessary first step to restoration of health and

strength is repentance of the habits and things which have brought on the state of ill health. All the physicians in the world, all the hospitals at work, all the faith of believing saints cannot restore to bodily health and strength one who refuses to repent of the habits which create weakness and disease. It is woven in the fiber of life, it is written in the law of God, repentance leads the way to the restoration of physical health. Now go a step higher: the same law works in the mind. If one's mind is the dwelling place of many devils, if one's mind is not clean and pure, if it is not vigorous and wide-awake, if one has a lazy mind, there is only one way to restore the mind, and that is to drive out the devils from the mind, cleanse the thought, stir up the mind to active thinking, repent of the very things which have brought the mind to its present state of disease or lethargy. The same law works in that all-inclusive term of life we call the soul. There can be no restored soul without repentance. I do not say that you must weep copious tears, that you must publish abroad the evil you have done and the righteousness you intend to do; but before God and in your own heart, if you have fallen away and want to be restored, you must repent.

There is a second law to the great truth of restoration. It is, *Right-about!* The Christian meaning of this step in restoration is found in the Greek word "straphate," which means right-about, to

turn around. It alludes to the movement of a ship when it is put about on an opposite course. Its prow was east, now its prow is west. Right-about! This law is dramatically illustrated in the experience of a well-known man who was going from one city to another. He had in his possession certain letters of introduction and commendation to men in authority in the city toward which he was journeying. The object he had in this journey was by no means high and noble; it was low and mean: he was going to that city to take certain men and women, who had done no harm, and return them, bound, to the city from which he had departed. But as he journeyed something happened. Something is always happening. Depend upon God for that. Strictly speaking, it is not a happening, it is the logical sequence of events. We simply use the commonly accepted language when we say that something happened. He was halted in his journey. It was no soft word that halted him. It was a hard, painful experience; it was a harsh blow. It takes such things to halt most of us when we are plunging headlong upon a mistaken path; many a man has been brought to his senses by a blow of sorrow; crushed by calamity he has seen the error of his ways.

> "Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough."

Fortunate the man who can take the blow in that

spirit; who, halted in his way, stops and asks himself, "Am I on the right way?" So this man took his blow. Struck to the ground by some phenomenon of nature, a vivid flash of light, a crash of thunder, he heard in the thunder a divine voice warning him that he was on the wrong track. He was wise enough, and humble enough, and great enough to acknowledge it, and he arose from the earth where the lightning-blow had felled him and said, "Lord, I will right-about." The things he once loved, he now hates. The things he once hated, he now loves. Such was the action of Paul. Instead of a persecutor of the Christians he became a defender of the faith. Paul was a distinguished Roman citizen. Now here is a distinguished Filipino citizen. I once had tea in his house and I was impressed with his ability as a man and his character as a Christian. Simeon Blas was his name. He lived several miles out from Manila, a prosperous fish merchant. There was a time when he was not a Christian; he was an ardent follower of the national evil, cock-fighting and its accompanying curse, gambling. He too was struck to the earth, he was brought face to face with his Lord, and in good, understandable language, was converted. He was the owner of some money-making cockpits. But he said, "No more of them, I am done with them." And Simeon Blas transferred his affection from the cockpit to the Church. He caused to be built near

his home a lovely little church, visible witness that Simeon Blas had fulfilled the law of restoration, "Simeon, right-about!" But what about those who are not Christian-haters, as was Saul, or cock-fighting gamblers, as was Simeon Blas? What about intelligent men and women, respectable citizens of the land, in large measure earnest men and women who want to do what is right? They too must right-about!

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?"

It was a Christian, William Cowper, who sang that. And we could well say to William Cowper, "Right-about, William Cowper, right-about!"

"The dearest idol that I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee."

Right-about is followed by a third law of restoration, and the third law is, *Right-forward!* It is not enough for the ship that it has escaped wreck by turning away from the rocks of danger: the ship must be kept right forward in the path of safety. It is not enough that the student in school, studying his lesson, masters the page; he must turn the page, he must keep right forward on the new page. It is not enough that a young man has learned his trade, has mastered it and has

the credentials to show such mastery; he must keep right forward in the performance of his duty, in doing good work. It is not enough that I have earned my money this week, to buy bread, pay rent, furnish necessities for those dependent upon me; I must keep right forward, for there are bread, shelter, and necessities of another week. It is not enough that a repentant soul has right-about-faced; that is good, but it is not enough: he must keep right forward. One day I received a letter from a man whom the Lord had restored, and he closed the letter with this sentence, "I pray that the Lord will restore to me the years the locust hath eaten." Well, the Lord has done that and will continue to do it so long as he keeps right-forward. O the tragedy of those who right-about-face, then stop. Our Churches are full of such tragedies—men who have put their hand to the plow and then looked back. Let us not be like unto them. Let us learn from them. Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we keep right forward. Keep right forward despite obstacles, opposition, distractions, discouragement, hardship; let nothing halt your progress. Two employees of a New York hotel entered the "pent" house on the roof one morning to repair a leak. As they clambered up the ladder they heard wings beating above them. "Look at the ducks," one of them said. Above them, on the concrete niche of an open ventilator, perched a

mallard drake. Near him fluttered his mate, dusky and brown. After a wild chase the birds were caught. The men found that the drake's left wing had been broken by a hunter's shot. Flying south from Canada, somewhere their way had been intercepted by hunters and the wing of one of the pair broken; but he kept on his way, making a forced landing on the roof of the tall hotel; and his mate was loyal with a beautiful loyalty. Fortunately the birds fell into the hands of friends. The manager of the hotel gave asylum to the pair until the invalid wing grew strong and they could go on their way. The wing was broken, but the bird kept right forward. Life has many "broken pinions," but keep right forward.

> "They climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil, and pain;
> O God, to us may grace be given
> To go right forward in their train."

There is a fourth law in this great truth of restoration: it may be stated in the winsome words, *Rest in the Lord.* Repentance, right-about, right-forward, rest in the Lord. What anticlimax is this, do you ask? I do not wonder that you ask it. No, I am not pleading idleness, ease, irresponsibility. Frankly I am pleading the supernatural in religion and life. That is, we come to the point where we are helpless. We have done all that we can do; there are some things that only God can do. That is the supernatural in life. That is

where miracle comes in. It is not hard for me to believe in miracles. Miracle is simply God supplying what man needs and man cannot supply himself. "What are you looking at?" inquired some friends one day of Michelangelo, who stood gazing at an uncut block of marble. "An angel," he replied. Yes, an angel was there; his artist's eye could see it and his skilled hands could release the angel in the stone. Even so Christ looks at you, sees in you infinite possibilities; where you fail he will fulfill. Leave room for the miracle in your life. Rest in the Lord. He *will* restore the years that the locust hath eaten.

XV

MYSTICAL ROOMS OF THE HOUSE

MYSTICAL ROOMS OF THE HOUSE

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES

Stewards of the mysteries of God.

1 Corinthians 4: 1

STEWARD is an honorable name. In the New Testament days no higher compliment could be paid a man than to say of him, "He is a faithful steward." The ideals of the office were placed very high. "It is required of a steward," said Paul, "that he be found faithful." It was assumed that a man who had reached the post of steward bore the mark of faithfulness. Just as we assume to-day that bankers are honest. By and large, throughout the United States, banking has been on such a high plane that it is taken for granted that a banker must first of all be an honest man, that he is an honest man. We could truly say in the language of the Apostle, "It is required of a banker that he be found honest." A steward was also a man who was trusted. He was trusted with *all the affairs* of a great household: The procuring and providing proper food for the family and attendants; the affairs of adjustment and payment of wages. The steward was also frequently intrusted with the affairs of the children of the household, teaching and training them. How great

and implicit was the trust placed in the hands of the steward is clearly revealed in the New Testament parables. Let the best-known of those parables furnish an illustration, the Parable of the Talents. It is as though you should call three men before you, and you give to one a thousand dollars, to the second five hundred, to the third one hundred. You say to them: "I intrust this money to your keeping; I expect you to use this money well, in due time to show the evidence of just returns on this money, but it is yours—Go!" They are stewards; you have no more authority over them or their money except the trust you have reposed in them.

Stewards of what? Not of the trinkets. We spend a good deal of time, money, and strength in being stewards of the trinkets, of the things that really do not matter. What does it really matter whether men worship God with the candles, incense, and processionals of the Gothic cathedral, or with the barren, rugged simplicity of the New England meetinghouse, just so they do worship God? Yet men battle over these trinkets, imagining that God has intrusted to them forever as stewards the one way or the other. What does it really matter whether we have the episcopal or the congregational form of Church government? Yet there are men who will stake their lives on the one form or the other, and scour the pages of history to make valid their claims; it is only a

trinket. So much of the energy of our religious life is taken up with preserving the trinkets. Organization, for example. The modern Church is so highly organized that the average minister is tempted to be nothing more nor less than the keeper of a machine, and his chief business to make the machine go. He says to himself, wringing his hands with despair the while, "Here is this club, this society, this project; if I cannot keep it alive, if I cannot make it a success, my ministry will be called a failure; what will my brethren in the ministry and the people of my congregation think of me if I fail to keep the wheels of this particular organization moving!" Alas, poor, deluded man; victim of the false emphasis of his calling. A steward of the trinkets!

No, no. Stewards not of the trinkets but of the mysteries of God. And what are the mysteries of God? First there is the mystery of *being*. Birth, life, death ever have been, still are, mysteries.

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

But we do not know; they are still mysteries to us. The flower in the crannied wall, the flower on display in yonder greenhouse window, the

flower on the table in your home, the first early spring flower which you plucked a few days ago, which had pushed its ambitious little head above the fallen dead leaves of last fall, every flower everywhere in every springtime is a mystery; but there is a greater mystery than the birth of a flower: that is the birth of a soul.

"Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into here.

Where did you get your eyes so blue?
Out of the sky as I came through.

How did you come to be just you?
God thought about me, and so I grew."

As when the first child of the human family was born in the dim and distant morning of life, so with the babe born this morning, birth is still one of the mysteries of God. But he has given it into our keeping; we are stewards of the mysteries of birth; God peoples the earth through the mystery of birth. The mystery of being includes living; life is a mystery. It is a mystery how the tiny, soft bones of a babe grow until they are the strong, unbending framework of a football giant or a dauntless pioneer. It is a mystery how the beginning of a brain in a babe grows until it becomes the brain of a Victor Hugo, the birthplace of "Les Miserables," the brain of a Napoleon, master of armies, or the brain of Lincoln, master of freedom. Life is a mystery, but God has given

it into our keeping. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" asks the Psalmist. He answers his own question: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor." That is, God has put into our keeping the mystery of life. And the mystery of death. Like birth, we have been facing death since the Garden of Eden, and it is still a mystery. Death comes now as ever and we face it as a blank, unanswering wall of mystery. We ask with Job, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The only answer to that question is the answer of the New Testament, the answer of the empty tomb, the answer of the risen Christ, the answer of his own lips, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," and the answer of the logician, Paul, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." And God has made us stewards of the mysteries of death.

> "Glory to God, in full anthems of joy,
> The being he gave us death cannot destroy."

Besides the mystery of being, which includes birth, life, and death, there is in the second place the mystery of *childhood*. One day I was summoned to a near-by town to give an address. Arriving a half hour ahead of the meeting, not caring to wait about the hotel lobby, I went to the house of a friend I have known many years. I pressed

the button by the side of the dooor. No response. I waited, was bold enough to peer into the window—yes, there was a light burning; I waited, still no response; I surveyed the house again—yes, some one must be at home. Again I pressed the button and waited. I heard some one coming, and my friend, minus his coat, opened the door. "How are you, Mr. Leworthy; what are you doing?" He is a quaint individualist, and with scarcely a word he beckoned, "Come with me and I will show you." I followed this coatless man through the lower reception room, up the stairs, down a long hall to the door of what I knew to be the bathroom. With no remark whatever he opened the door and pointed my way in. There I saw a child in the bathtub, a sturdy, darling little boy of twenty months, and Mr. and Mrs. Leworthy together were giving him his evening bath, and they were having quite the time of their lives, for the child was not their child; he was their grandchild. So great is the mystery of childhood that the mystery grows with the years, and a child is more of a wonder to grandparents than to parents. And God has given into our stewardship the mystery of childhood. The Church holds the stewardship of childhood. We are responsible. Yet, are we altogether responsible? Is it not a mutual affair? The Church is responsible to provide the place, the proper place with the right atmosphere for the religious instruction of childhood, and the chil-

dren's part is to match that provision with loyalty, faithfulness, and regularity. Girls and boys, the best investment you can make is the investment of interest in the Church of God. And, older people, the best investment we can make is the investment in the childhood of the community. God has made us responsible for that investment, stewards of that great mystery.

We are stewards of the mystery of the *home*. You may not call this a mystery, but I hold that it is. It is a mystery that God ordained that his society should be founded upon, centered in, the home. It is a mystery that God said, "Let us make man in our image; let us make a helpmeet for that man; let these two become as one; let them be each to the other, bone of bone and flesh of flesh; for the woman let the man leave his kindred, and for the man let the woman leave her loved ones; let them dwell together." In other words, let them establish a home, heart of the community, heart of the nation, heart of God's order of society; strangely simple yet marvelously mysterious, the home. And we are stewards of the mystery of the home. That is, if the home is going to survive the terrific onslaughts that are made upon it, it will survive because the Church keeps with fidelity her stewardship. What are these terrific onslaughts? I would not say that the chief onslaught comes from the stage, though the stage in spots and at times is indecent enough.

I would not say that the chief onslaught is from the film, though the average home produced in the average film is far from ideal and also far from average. I would not say that the most terrific onslaught is from liquor, though that is indescribably terrific. Oh, let us not forget the fruits of drunkenness: by their fruits ye shall know them. One has only to look upon a home wrecked by drunkenness to turn and swear eternal fidelity to sobriety and the government that stands for sobriety. Nor is the most terrific onslaught upon the home that of poverty. If to-day there should be bequeathed to me one power, what would I choose? I would choose the power to walk the paths of earth, and wherever I walk, banish poverty. Yet the most terrific onslaught upon the home is something else. What is it? It is the onslaught of Godlessness. The cancer in the body of the home is Godlessness. With thought for comforts, conveniences, plenty, but no thought for God. With attention to pleasures, thrills, luxuries, but no attention to God. With time and money for anything and everything, but no money or time for God's House and God's Day. No home can survive that. Alas for those who build their home upon the sands of Godlessness, no faith in God, no time for God; for when the floods come, as come they will, when the winds blow, as blow they will, when the storms beat, as beat they will, that home will fall. Blessed are they who build their home

upon the rock of faith in God, time for God; for when the floods come, as come they will, when the winds blow, for blow they will, when the storms beat, for beat they will, that home will stand, for it is founded upon a rock; the building may crumble, but the home will endure.

In the fourth place, we are stewards of the mysteries of *faith*. Religion is still a mystery. After the resurrection Thomas stood face to face with Jesus. He had refused to believe the word brought him by the other disciples until he could touch with his own hands the nail prints, see with his own eyes his risen Lord. He saw Christ face to face, he touched his hands, then cried, "My Lord and God." Our risen Lord is a mystery to us. The Cross is a mystery. Long ago certain men said, "The preaching of the cross is foolishness," and they would have nothing to do with it. They thrust it out of their consideration because it was a mystery. There are men like that to-day, men who will have nothing to do with anything that is a mystery. Forgiveness is a mystery. Eternal life is a mystery. Mystery, mystery on every hand, but the greatest mystery of all is the mystery of religion. Paul summed it all up when he declared, "Great is the mystery of Godliness." Even experience does not draw back the curtains from the mystery. When a man declares, as did the blind man by the wayside in Galilee, "Once I was blind, but now I see," that does not solve the mystery.

When a man who has been dead in trespasses and sins declares, "My feet which were in the mire are now on the solid rock, my sins have been washed away, whiter than snow," that does not unfold the mystery of the event. When a son who has been lost is found, and the old relationship of sonship restored as before, and the father cries, "My son who was lost is found; he was dead, and is now alive," that does not remove the mystery. But there is no war between mystery and experience, mystery and fact, mystery and history; they greet one another with a friendly kiss, they achieve together. And as they meet we reverently cry, "Thank God for the mysteries."

XVI

RECOVERED YESTERDAYS OF THE HOUSE

13

RECOVERED YESTERDAYS OF THE HOUSE

JESUS GAVE HIM BACK

Jesus gave him back to his mother.

Luke 7: 15

THAT was a happy day. I suppose it was the happiest day in the life of the widow of Nain. Happier than her wedding day. Happier than the day upon which her son was born. Happiest of all happy days was the day when her son, who had died, was restored to life, and given back to her. Except for this son she was all alone in the world. In the clear language of Scripture we read that "he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." He was her support. He was her companion. He was her daily pride and joy. He was to her as father, husband, brother, and son, this son of hers. He embodied all her hopes and ambitions. She banked on him. She built on his future. Her dreams were dreams with him at the heart of them. But he died. This only son of the widow was taken by death, for "death is no respecter of persons." Death knocks at the door of the palace and the cottage. Death visits, without partiality, the homes of the rich and the poor. Death taps on the shoulder and says, "Come with me"—the little babe, the child, the radiant

youth, the sturdy man or woman, and tottering age. At what stage in life will death tap us on the shoulder and bid us come none can say. In youth, glorious youth, was the son of the widow tapped by death, "Come with me." And he went. What else could he do? He went away in the company of death. That day they carried him out of the town. His friends, a company of sorrowing people, surrounded his bier and followed after. Among them, but not of them, was his mother. And she was weeping. It was her sorrow above all others. These others were only his friends, his chance acquaintances. But she was his mother. Now this little group of mourners going out met another group coming in. This other group coming in had at its center another son, Jesus the Son of Mary. Jesus' eyes, ever open to see what was taking place, what need there was, what help he could give, saw the sorrowing group. He noted at once the weeping widow. He held up his hand and quietly halted the group. Looking directly at the weeping mother, he said in a soft voice of compassionate authority, "Weep not." I can see her wiping her eyes, quickly gaining control of herself. "Weep not." Then going to the side of the bier he said to the youth, "Young man, arise." And he who was dead sat up and began to speak. The company that was headed for the cemetery turned about and went home. The two groups mingled and became one, and the happiest person

of all in that happy group was the mother whose son had been restored to her arms. Jesus is the Great Restorer. What does he restore?

In the first place he gives us back our DEPARTED FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. "Now, be careful," I hear some one say, "do not let your imagination run away with you, or your poetic fancy get the better of you; stick to the cold, hard fact of human experience. You do not mean to tell me that Jesus stands by the bier of our departed loved one and says, 'Arise,' and he arises before our very eyes and walks and talks!" No, I do not mean to say that. But I do mean to say that Jesus is the only one who has given tangible proof to the hope of life beyond death. He entered the tomb. He came out again. He broke the bands of death. He rose from the grave. The grave is empty. Christ is risen. This same Jesus stands by the bier of our loved one, meets us on the way to "God's Acre," and says "Stop a moment," and to those who weep he speaks directly, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. I am the resurrection, and the life." No one else has ever spoken like that. He does it in another way than by the attestation of

life beyond the grave. In the place of departed friends and loved ones he gives us others, new friends. The mother who loses her only child by death need not be childless. The world is full of children needing mothering. It is the height of selfishness for a mother who loses her only child to lose all interest in or love for children. It is equally selfish for a woman who has no child of her own to care little or not at all for any children. Women who lavish money upon themselves, spending, spending, always spending for themselves, will have much to answer for in the great judgment of life. On the other hand, it would seem that God permits some women to be childless to show the rest of the world the sort of motherhood all women should exemplify. Two of the best mothers I know are maiden ladies, who care every day, with a true mother's sweetness and wisdom, for forty or more little children in a community crèche. If one loses his mother in death, he need not be motherless. Jesus gives us back our mother in the many aged ones who need our care and attention. Jesus gives us back our departed friends in new friends. 'Twas a beautiful thing that Alfred Tennyson grieved so for his dead friend Arthur Hallam, for out of that grief came the great "In Memoriam." But did he not grieve unduly? Did he not nurse his grief and hug it to his heart? Arthur Hallam was gone; but there were scores of others who needed Tenny-

son's friendship, who could have been a friend as true as Arthur Hallam. Yes, in more ways than one, Jesus gives us back our departed friends and loved ones.

In the second place Jesus gives us back our FORGOTTEN VOWS. Is there any sadder circumstance of life than this; vows, taken in all sincerity, in an hour of true exaltation, forgotten, laid in the tomb, dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes? O the pity of it, the grave of forgotten vows! Before the marriage altar they promised each the other, to "love, cherish, comfort, honor, keep in sickness and in health, according to God's holy ordinance, till death do us part." *They* are living; *the vows* are dead. Before the altar of the church he stood and vowed his vow, "I receive Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. I will be loyal to Christ's Church and uphold it by my prayers, my presence, my gifts, and my service. I will guard myself against all things contrary to the teaching of God's Word and endeavor to lead a holy life, following the commandments of God." He who took that vow is still on earth, prosperous, successful, efficient, but his vow is farthest from his thoughts, forgotten. O the grave of forgotten vows! Jesus will give them back to us. He alone can do it. He will not *make* you do it. You take a vow at the bank that you will pay a certain amount of money on a certain date; they will make you do it. They have recourse to the courts, to your

property, your business, your security. Jesus does not compel anyone to recall his forgotten vows. He says, "If you will let me, I will recall them from the grave. I will speak to them, saying 'Arise,' and they will arise and speak to you." It will be a happy day. It will be the happiest day of your life, the day you permit Jesus to give back to you your forgotten vows.

Again, Jesus gives us back our LOST YEARS. I am not thinking now about any Ponce de Leon idle dream. Rather I mean that the years that have been wasted are restored to us in fresh opportunity. If we will let him, God will give us another chance. Albert J. Beveridge is remembered as the young man who thirty years ago entered the United States Senate at thirty-seven years of age and distinguished himself during two terms of notable service. He was never able to return to the Senate, though he tried, and was eminently capable and worthy. It would seem that those were lost years. But God gave him back his lost years in a new opportunity, the opportunity to study and write. Albert J. Beveridge will be long remembered as the author of "The Life of Chief Justice John Marshall," written toward the close of his life. He is also the author of a book which I own and prize very highly. It is called "The Young Man and the World." The last chapter is entitled "The Young Man's Second Wind; or, Facing the World at Fifty." He himself was called upon

to do that. He himself demonstrated what God is ready to do with any of us who take him at his word. Here is a man who comes of good, Christian parents. In their Christian home they have tried to give him every opportunity they could afford. So he has a fair education, an excellent trade. But he falls into evil ways. Bad companions lead him into habits of gambling and drunkenness. He loses one job, gets another, only to lose that. Discouraged, trying to fight these devils of gambling and drink with his own strength, he fails again and again. Then a voice within, a voice of the old days, says to him, "I will help you." "Who are you?" "I am your shepherd." Then he recalls the words of the Psalm his mother had taught him: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters." He says to himself: "I will follow my Shepherd from this day on." And Jesus gives back to him his lost years. No, life can never be the same after we have wasted the years, after we have spent them; but life can be different, it can be helpful. Some of the most helpful people we have are those to whom Jesus has handed back their lost years.

Jesus also gives us back our FRAGRANT MEMORIES.

> "Backward, turn backward, O time in your flight,
> Make me a child again just for to-night!"

So sang Elizabeth Akers Allen. He is not a normal human being who does not respond to that sentiment, who does not look back with affection to the days of his childhood, whether they were days of plenty or poverty, of ease or hardship. The normal memories of childhood are fragrant memories.

> "There are gains for all our losses,
> There are balms for all our pain,
> But when youth, the dream, departs,
> It takes something from our hearts,
> And it never comes again."

That is hardly true. That something, taken from our hearts, is restored to us. It comes again, by memory itself. What a blessing is memory! All our past life is built up again by memory. And it does not require much to do it. A single word, a verse of a song, the perfume of a certain flower, an old book or memento of days that are gone, and all comes back with vividness and accuracy, the fragrance of memory. Let me but see the sunlight fall across the room in a certain way and I am again in my boyhood home. It is a Sunday afternoon. My father and mother and sister are there. I see the little old parlor, the flowered carpet on the floor, the slender table in the center with an oil lamp upon it, the lounge in the corner, three or four chairs, a whatnot in one corner, and in another an old organ. Mother or sister sits down at that old organ and plays; it all comes back

by the sunlight falling across the floor at a certain angle, fragrant memories. Jesus gives us these fragrant memories not only out of the past, but in the present. A few days ago a man assumed the office of president in one of Buffalo's influential clubs. Before him on the table was a basket of flowers. The card with the flowers read, "From your ten children and grandchildren who congratulate you and rejoice with you on this day of your honor." In the children and grandchildren he now has, God gives him back his fragrant memories. Fragrant memories save in many a situation. They turned the thought of the Prodigal Son toward home. There was the desperate situation in which he found himself. We lose sight of that. Had he not been in such a desperate situation, had everything been fair, prosperous, and lovely, would he have thought of home? But being in that desperate situation, how good it was that he had a home back yonder of fragrant memory to call him back. Had there been no such home, even the desperate situation in which he found himself would have availed him little. "Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom, sometimes where Eden's flowers bloom," sometimes one way, sometimes another Jesus gives us back our fragrant memories.

And then at the last Jesus gives us back our DEAD HOPES. I mean that in the extremity of life God is with us. I mean that "man's extremity is God's opportunity." No situation is utterly hope-

less from God's viewpoint. Sidney Lanier, whose immortal verse was born in agony and dire extremity, stricken with a mortal malady, almost lacking subsistence for his family in a wealthy city, made one last valiant effort, and never again questioned the goodness of God. God gave him back his dead hopes. Job saw all his hopes buried in the grave. Dead, gone—family, friends, property, health, all gone. Still he trusted, still he prayed, still he kept his integrity. And God gave him back his dead hopes, for the latter end of his life was blessed above his beginning. Milton in his blindness wrote—

> "Yet I argue not
> Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
> Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
> Right onward."

Well he might, for God gives back to such their dead hopes.

Jesus gave him back to his mother. Stand again at the gateway of the village of Nain. Mingle with the two groups, the one going out, the other coming in. Sorrowing, weeping, their mourning is turned to joy as Jesus restores to his mother her son. What a happy day! The happiest day in all their life! This may be a happy day with you, the happiest of days, when his power is manifest, his promise is fulfilled, and Jesus gives you back what you thought was gone forever.

XVII

NEW YEAR'S AT THE HOUSE

NEW YEAR'S AT THE HOUSE

THE THINGS THAT ABIDE

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13

IF there is any misfortune connected with the number thirteen, that superstition is effectively dealt with here. The ghost is laid low, never to rise again. The verse that accomplishes this feat is the thirteenth verse of the thirteenth chapter. If this is superstition and misfortune, let us have more of it.

There is one word that at once rivets our attention; it is the word "abideth." That would captivate us any time, but especially at the New Year's season it captures and holds us. Abideth! How few things abide. On this occasion, when we note the passing of time, the turning of the calendar, we are brought face to face with the fact that even time does not abide: it hurries on. What a hymn is that one from the heart of Isaac Watts!

"The busy tribes of flesh and blood,
With all their cares and fears,
Are carried downward by the flood,
And lost in following years.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come;
Be thou our guide while life shall last,
And our eternal home!"

A traveler, wandering through the desert sands of Egypt, discovered an enormous statue lying broken on the ground. Upon the pedestal was inscribed, in hieroglypics, these words, "Ozymandias, king of kings." There is a very meager record of the career of this particular king; even learned students of archæology know little about him. He must have been a man of considerable importance in his day and generation, but he is utterly forgotten now; his fame did not abide long. Napoleon asked the sculptor Canova how long his best statue would endure. The sculptor replied, "If protected and kept from accident, perhaps six thousand years." "That will not do," said the little corporal; "I must have something that will last longer than that."

Now abideth faith, hope, love. The astounding, no, the simple truth is that no material thing abides. Once upon a time, long, long ago, a group of men whom God had blessed, fearful that they should be scattered and forgotten, said one to another, "Come now, let us tarry here and build a city, and right in the midst of the city we will build a tower. We

will build it of brick and mortar, so that it shall stand. We will build it so high that it shall reach to heaven. It will be seen from far distances and we'll make a name for ourselves, a name that shall endure." But lo, God saw their folly and prevented them. He stopped Babel before it had been carried too far. So too will he stop us if we trust overmuch in horses and chariots, armies and navies, commercial skyscrapers and soaring cathedrals. Now that does not mean that we are to build slipshod; that four walls and a roof will do for a house, a rude tabernacle for a church, a barn for a great store. Not at all. Let us build solidly, beautifully, with an eye to permanence, convenience, and comfort. Let us put our gifted brains, our skilled hands, our best materials into everything that we touch. But for all that the word "abideth" can never be written across anything that we build. When our fathers built these substantial homes along Delaware Avenue they no doubt thought they would stand for long, long years to come—a hundred, perhaps two hundred years. Only fifty years have passed and they are tearing them down to make way for more ambitious structures.

Do you recall Hugh Walpole's recent book, "The Cathedral"? It is the tragic story of a clergyman who was devoted to his cathedral. He was passionately fond of the stately and dignified service. He doted on the perfect architecture, the rich win-

dows, the rare furnishings. Alas, while he lavished his attention upon his cathedral, faith, hope, and love were slipping away from him. He lost the affection of his wife. His boys drifted away and became aliens to the life he espoused. No, we cannot write "abideth" across the front of any churchly structure, but we can write it beneath the Christ to whom the temple is dedicated, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." We can write the word "abideth" across those things which are proclaimed in the temple: faith, hope, and love.

Faith is placed first. That is, man's attitude toward God. The same mind that gave us this prose poem, the thirteenth of First Corinthians, also gave us another decidedly different but equally great chapter, the eleventh of Hebrews. That chapter begins with what to this day stands as the sublimest and most satisfactory definition of faith. "Now faith," says he, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." At the expense of expounding the obvious let us start with the simplest illustration of faith—that is, in relation to our everyday life. Some one has said that it is faith which has marked the change from savagery to civilization. Organized society is but a huge association founded on the give and take of faith. Take the most ordinary example. I have a sister living in Los Angeles. I desire to see her; it is necessary that I see her. Therefore I go down to the city ticket office and in return

for some money I am handed a long slip of paper with instructions to board at a certain time and station a fast-moving vehicle called a railway train. With implicit faith in the indefinite thing called a "Railroad Company" I follow instructions. A man whom I have never seen, and who has never seen me, takes the long slip of paper and by doing so says as vehemently as if he spoke out loud, "You may stay on this train and I will see that you make good progress toward California." For days and nights I trust myself without reserve or question to engineers, firemen, telegraphers, trainmen, whom I have never seen, whom in all probability I shall never lay eyes upon, of whose character I know nothing by direct knowledge, but I have faith in them. All of life is just like that. All business is done on the basis of faith. Governments are run by faith. What is the matter with Europe? A few days ago I saw and heard Bishop Edgar Blake of Paris. He held up a Russian note for one million rubles. In the old days, before the war, that represented about five hundred thousand dollars of American money. When he held it there it was worth about nine cents. It seems incredible that the currency system of a nation can be so shot to pieces as it is in practically every government upon the European continent. What is the trouble? Europe is sick. There is but one cure for that sickness—namely, faith. Faith in one another, restored confidence. And faith in

God. For faith in God is the basic principle of which the apostle speaks. It is a terrible thing for individuals and nations to lose faith in one another. There is only one thing worse, to lose faith in God.

> "Sad losses have ye met,
> But mine is heavier yet,
> For a believing heart hath gone from me."

H. G. Wells in one of his books describes his hero, Benham, as devoting his life to what he calls "The Research Magnificent." "He never faltered in his persuasion," says the author, "that behind the dingy face of this world, the earthly stubbornness, the baseness and dullness of himself and all of us, lurked the living jewels of heaven, the light of glory, things unspeakable." Now abideth faith. It is one of the few things that does abide. For the sake of a troubled world, for the sake of our own beloved land, for the sake of our homes, for our own soul's sake let us "hold fast the profession of our faith."

In the second place the apostle names hope. That is, man's attitude toward time. At first thought hope is out of place. We say hope does not belong in the company of virtues of surpassing grandeur and necessity like faith and love. The apostle thinks otherwise. He names them in the same breath, with only a comma separating, faith, hope, love, these three. Yes, hope is important. One of the verses of the Bible, dark with tragedy,

is the verse in Ephesians where those who were aliens from Christ are described as "having no hope, and without God in the world." Over against that statement place that other verse radiant with beauty, in Romans, "for we are saved by hope." I have on my shelves a book entitled "Prisoners of Hope." No, it is not a novel, it is a book of sermons. The book takes its name from the first sermon from the text in Zechariah, "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." Are we not all prisoners of hope? Is it not hope that keeps us alive, keeps us battling? If we could have now some life-revelations, some heart-confessions, amazement would be written all over our faces. If I were to tell you of the things I have hoped for and never obtained, and if you were to tell me of the dreams you have had that have never been realized, we would find the adequate picture of our years in this vivid phrase, "prisoners of hope." We have stood so often, it seems, behind locked doors and barred windows, beating our fists against the iron which does not weaken, but only weakens us, prisoners of hope. How fortunate is this phrase, "prisoners of hope." If it were just "prisoners," then we would surrender. But the added words mean that the night will pass and the morning dawn, prisoners *of hope*. Let hope be our attitude toward time! Facing a new year, let us face it with hope! Youthful, middle-aged, or old, let us, as J. M. Barrie said in his

notable rectorial address, "greet the unseen with a cheer." Better still, let us make the Psalmist's question and answer ours, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."

In the third place the apostle names love. Faith, man's attitude toward God. Hope, man's attitude toward time. Love, man's attitude toward his fellows, toward time and God. Gibbon gives five reasons why Christianity expanded so rapidly at the outset of its career: (1) The zeal of the primitive Christians; (2) their doctrine of immortality; (3) the miraculous powers of the apostolic church; (4) her pure morality; (5) the union and the discipline of the Christian republic. No doubt he has named five great reasons; but is there not a sixth, and is not the sixth the principal reason—that is, love? If, as some one has said, the genius of Buddhism is asceticism, of Confucianism secularism, of Mohammedanism fanaticism, and of Hinduism mysticism, then the genius of Christianity is love. Love interprets God. No man at any time hath seen God. We know not what words to use to describe him or define him except these three wonderful words, "God is love!" Love manifests Christ. "God commendeth his love for us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Love empowers the Christian. Hatred and covetousness and jealousy and rivalry and the sword

have failed; let us give love a chance. O that it might be true of the Christian nations of the world, and of individuals, as Margaret Blakie writes,

"Our souls are all afire with love—with love our hearts are glowing,
The mystic peace that Jesus gives, our joyous strains are showing;
For lo! our love cannot be hid—our brimming cup outflowing
To God, and our neighbor, and our enemy."

The clothing which we buy our children and ourselves soon wears out. The house in which we live will some day crumble and fall. The property which we have accumulated we shall soon have to leave. The busy avenue upon which this church fronts will some day be as a tomb. The very nation of which we are a part and which we love with a patriot's adoration will some day be a forgotten name; but now—how choice and penetrating these words—and now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

XVIII
EASTER AT THE HOUSE

EASTER AT THE HOUSE

ROOMS HERE AND THERE

In my Father's house are many rooms.

John 14: 2

IN my Father's house are many mansions," is the common rendering. But it is perfectly correct to render this assurance of Jesus, In my Father's house are many rooms. If you were asked right now to name your favorite portion of Scripture you probably would name the fourteenth chapter of John. What a chapter it is! So beautiful, that trying to improve it is like attempting to add to lilies by decorating them with colored paint. So deep, that philosophers cannot plumb the depths of wisdom the chapter contains. So plain, that a simple, trusting child can understand the full meaning of these words:

> "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

What is the theme of these great words? Immortality. I, for one, am grateful for the theme. I am glad that Easter comes once a year when any

other theme would be grotesquely inappropriate. It is our privilege to think thoughts of immortality any time; it is our obligation to think them at the Easter season. "The most human thing about us is to cling to mortality; the most divine thing about us is to cling to immortality." Immortality is not a demonstrable fact, but it is believable. "We do not believe in immortality because we have proved it," said Martineau, "but we forever try to prove it because we believe it." But whenever or however we think of immortality it is a satisfaction to recall the calm, sure words of Jesus. There was never any question in Jesus' mind about the deathless life. He did not befog the situation by saying, "I have never seen the soul in the laboratory; that soul has never been revealed under the microscope on the experimental table." I am not saying that it is wrong to doubt, or that one should not investigate this great subject of immortality, and try to prove it. I am only saying that Jesus spoke with plainness and simplicity about it. In my Father's house are many rooms. Let us walk through that house yonder and look at the rooms. What rooms will we find there? What rooms do you want to find in the Father's house?

The first room we ought to find there, the first room many will want to find there is the *children's room.* Surely the children's room will be one of the biggest, brightest, and best rooms in the Father's house. He who said, "Suffer the little chil-

dren to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," will see to it that the children's room is ample, sunny, and easy of access. When I was a boy one of my playmates died, Edward Bailey, a fine lad, an only child. Years later when his mother went home I am sure the first room she sought in the Father's house was the children's room, and she searched among the children until she found her Edward. Dean Inge, of St. Paul's, London, will hasten first of all to the children's room when he goes home. He is called the "Gloomy Dean." Gloomy or not, he has brains and a heart. His brains are of such a quality that when he writes or speaks the world reads or listens. He has a heart too, quite the equal of his brain, though all the world does not know it. This heart he reveals in a little book called "Personal Devotion and the Religious Life." The closing chapter of the book is devoted to the story of his little girl, Margaret Paula, who entered the Father's house on Thursday of Holy Week, nineteen hundred and twenty-two. She had been taken ill eighteen months before she died, and all those months she was compelled to live on a very low diet, without any of the dainties which children love, and she bore the privation with a serenity and patience which astonished doctors and nurses. One day when she felt very hungry, but knew that she should not be hungry, she exercised her imagination, saying, "I am a princess, so I

must not feel hungry." To the very end she was busy with her needle, making Easter presents for her parents, brothers, and sister. A few months before she died her little brother said to her when they were alone, "O Paula, I wish you would get better." "No, Richard," she said, "you must not say that. God has spared me a whole year to be with you all, and it has been the happiest year of my life." A little later, when she was no longer able to use her pencil and paint-box, she said to her mother. "I am the happiest little girl in all the world." A lovely child, a dear little saint and philosopher, was Margaret Paula, whose sweet disposition and pure character her father, with becoming restraint, imparted to the pages of his book. Now I am sure that when Dean Inge goes home the first room he will seek will be the children's room, the children's room and Margaret Paula. Yes, and there are thousands of others like him. Be glad, therefore, for in the Father's house are many rooms, and among them is the children's room.

A second room in the Father's house, not far from the children's room, will be the room of *recognition and reunion.* Shall we know one another in heaven? is a question often arising in our minds. Yes, is the answer of our faith, and of this Book. The Gospel writers tell of Peter, James, and John going with Jesus up into the mountain where Jesus was transfigured before

them. While there Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they knew them. Though they had never met them on earth, they knew them. There must have been some mark of recognition. Paul says: "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." It was in sixteen hundred and sixty-seven that Robert Hooke made sound travel along a streched-out wire. A little later a man named Wheatstone caused the sound of a musical box to travel along a rod from a cellar to an upper room where an audience was gathered. As late as eighteen hundred and sixty-one Johann Philip Reis produced an electrical phone which carried music and vocal sounds, but not speech. And it was only in eighteen hundred and seventy-six that two men, Elisha Gray and Alexander Graham Bell, appeared at the United States Patent Office the same day with instruments, in principle, the same as we use to-day in our phoning. All that practically within our generation. Only recently Secretary Herbert Hoover spoke into a telephone in Washington and was heard by a group of men in New York two hundred and fifty miles away. Not only heard but seen. As he spoke there was reflected on a screen a perfect image, every nod of the head, every gesture, every facial expression, synchronizing perfectly with his message. His words were carried over the wire; his image over the wire and through the air. The event was characterized as an epochal achievement. I am not trying to link

up television with recognition in heaven; I only remark that if men can do that, what cannot God do! Recognition and reunion, blessed experiences of the Father's house. We often say that "the best part of going away is getting home." Why? Because we greet again the ones we love, the friends from whom we have been separated. I do not know of any experience quite like the experience of being away and getting home again. There is a thrill about it nothing else gives. When the soldier boys march down the streets of the old home town, seeing again the faces and forms of friends from whom they have long been separated; when the ship steams up the harbor, and anxious forms press the rail, looking toward the pier, and eager eyes on the pier strain to see the loved face upon the ship; when the son who has been away, given up as dead, returns home, I can understand the father beside himself with joy as he cries, "My son was lost, he is found; he was dead, and is alive again." Why should it not be the same when we come at last to the Father's house?

A third room we shall look for when we come to the Father's house, the room of *work and play.* What shall we do in heaven? is another question we often ask. There is rest in heaven, but it is not the rest of idleness. It is the rest of doing the thing we want to do, we are fitted to do, for the sheer joy of doing it.

"And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame;
But each for the joy of working, and each in his separate star
Shall draw the thing as he sees it for the God of things as they are!"

So wrote Rudyard Kipling, hardly a prophet, but he has a right to his view of heaven quite as much as any one else. And his view that it is a place where we shall not be idle, but busy, fits in with our view. Looking into the words and parables of Jesus one cannot help noting that Jesus was concerned with activity. No idler could be happy in Jesus' company. God uses men who are busy. When he needed a man to lay the foundations for a new Israel, he called Moses, who was busy with his task. When God needed a prophet, he called Amos from among the herdmen of Tekoa. When he needed a poet, he summoned David, a shepherd lad, from the hills of Palestine. When he needed an apostle, he turned to the busy fisherman of Galilee, bending over his nets. We often say, "When you want something done, go to a busy man or woman." This has its basis in God himself, for he uses busy men to do his great work. As it is here on earth, so shall it be in heaven; heaven will be a busy place. Busy and happy, for we find our greatest joy in work. It is a great joy to stand above a finished piece of work, a product of the hands or of the brain, and say of it, "That

is mine; I did that." If we are going to be fitted for heaven, we must pray not only the prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep;" that evening prayer has a morning counterpart,

> "Now I get me up to work,
> I pray the Lord I may not shirk.
> If I should die before the night,
> I pray the Lord my work's all right."

Heaven, I know, is a place of work. And of play. Soon after the death of Mark Twain a religious weekly had an article entitled "A Land of No Laughter." In this article the author asked the question, "Can we find a place for laughter in heaven, or is it a land of no laughter?" How foolish the question! No laughter in heaven! Surely there is laughter in heaven. Laughter is clean, pure, and wholesome, and whatever is wholesome and clean and pure will be found in heaven. As Jesus on earth sought the company of those who worked and played, so also shall we find in the Father's ample house the room of work and play.

Another room we shall certainly find in the Father's house, the *living room.* I mean that heaven is a place of mingling. It is not a place of isolation. Each person, each group will not be in some selfish corner alone; but they shall mingle in God's great living room. John in his vision in the Revelation says this: "I beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kin-

dreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne." John had a foregleam of heaven. What he saw we welcome. If Russia can produce a man like Tolstoi, the Russians have a place in the living room of the Father's house. If Germany can produce a man like Luther, the Germans will be there. If France can lay claim to a man like Victor Hugo, nothing can bar the French from God's living room. If England can produce a Wesley, Scotland a Mathewson, Ireland a St. Patrick, I rather think the British Isles will have right to the Father's house. If Italy can claim as native sons Raphael and Angelo, then we shall meet Italians in the great living room of the Father's house. If India can produce a Ghandi, the Philippines a Simeon Blas, Japan a Madame Yajima, then there will be something of an Oriental air to heaven's living room. Only it will not be Oriental or Occidental air, but the air of heaven. Blessed mingling. I have been for some months a member of a little group, one each from the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Disciples, Congregational, Lutheran, Baptist, and Methodist bodies, meeting occasionally to talk over the matter of Christian unity, the things that separate us and the things that unite us, stressing the things that unite. It is sometimes difficult for us to mingle in the same living room here on earth, denominationally speaking; but I am sure there will be no difficulty in heaven, for the Father himself will lead us to his

great living room, and instantly some one will lift the tune in which we will all join,

> "Blest be the tie that binds
> Our hearts in Christian love."

Now I am sure there is one final room we shall expect to find in the Father's house, a room we shall not be content until we do enter, and that is the room *where we shall see Christ.* One of the last words of the Revelation is this promise, "They shall see his face." Every one of us, at some time or other, has longed to see some one in particular —some one of whom we have read, or whom we have greatly admired. This is particularly the mark of youth. As a boy I was eager to see William McKinley. As a lad I was also a great admirer of John G. Woolley. Both these men I saw, and it was a joy to set eyes on them. But how much greater joy will it be to see the Saviour whose brow was pierced for me, who bore the cross for me, who entered the tomb for me, who conquered death for me, whose face is ever toward my face with sympathy, understanding, forgiveness, and love. I once heard the blind poet Fanny Crosby say it, with a trembling voice and a thrilling faith,

> "I shall see him face to face,
> And tell the story saved by grace."

She has long since entered the Father's house and paused in the room where she has seen Christ.

"My Father's house is built on high
Far, far above the starry sky."

So sings William Hunter. Some one has said that this world is one of the rooms in God's house. Whether we think of our Father's house as a glorified replica of our ideal homes here on earth, or whether we fling our gaze out across star upon star, universe after universe, and say, "This old world is only one room in our Father's house," matters little. The essential thing is that Jesus speaks and we listen, "In my Father's house are many rooms." The essential thing is that we lay claim to that house, we want to enter it and live there. There is only one way. The way to inherit our Father's house is to live right in our houses here on earth. William E. Gladstone was once asked, "What is the most important question before England?" He replied, "The most important question before England to-day or any day is one's personal relationship to Jesus Christ." Yes, the most important question before us Easter day or any day is one's personal relationship to Jesus Christ. Take Christ as your example, take him as your Master, take him as your Lord, take him as your Saviour, take him as your all in all, serve him, follow him, and he will bring you home, safe home at last, to the Father's house.

XIX

THANKSGIVING AT THE HOUSE

THANKSGIVING AT THE HOUSE

ONE AGAINST NINE

Where are the nine?
Luke 17: 17

ONE day Jesus journeyed toward Jerusalem, passing through Samaria and Galilee. On the way he was met by ten lepers. They stood afar off. That was the custom. It still is the custom. I once visited the leper colony at Culion, Philippine Islands. As we stepped from our boat to the landing we saw the lepers, scores of them, lined up along the shore drive. We spent the day at the colony, visiting their homes, hospitals, schools, churches, stores, and markets. We were with them and among them, but always there was that sense of separateness, that space between them and us, graphically told in these words, "They stood afar off." These ten lepers of the long ago, seeing Jesus, lifted up their voices and cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus turned and said, "Go, show yourselves unto the priests." Why show themselves to the priests? It may have been any one of a half dozen reasons. I think it was a test of their faith. In any event they did as they were told. They went, and as they went they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back and glori-

fied God. Jesus inquired, "Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?" That question, with its searching rebuke and penetrating pathos, comes ringing down the centuries, and we hear it to-day: "Where are the nine?"

The one thing which God needs and requires is praise. He is not enriched by any material offering we may bring him. Through the Psalmist he says to us: "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving." How is it with an earthly parent? What does he require? What is it that gladdens his heart? It is not a material gift, but praise and thanksgiving, appreciation and affection; these gladden his heart. God is our heavenly Father. Praise, and praise alone may be set down as his requirement.

Not only is praise the one thing which God stands in need of; it is also the one thing we can give. We may not have silver and gold, but we have plenty of praise. We are like Peter and John, who went up to the temple to pray. Outside the temple they saw the lame beggar, reaching out his hand and with half-whining and half-

plaintive voice asking coins. They answered, "Silver and gold have we none; but such as we have give we unto thee; In the name of Jesus rise up and walk." Now I recognize of course that the great work of religion cannot be carried on without material gifts. But with all our material gifts there is a grievous lack of this gift of which we have most, this gift which, the more we give the more we have left, the gift of praise.

Praise shows man at his best. Look upon Millet's "Angelus" and you will see a man at his best. There he stands in his field of labor, out a short distance from the village. The roofs of the houses and the spire of the village church are clearly discernible. His wife is by his side, their implements of toil in their hands or on the ground, their half-finished work evidenced in the partially filled basket of freshly dug potatoes. The Angelus sounds; at once their toil is stopped, they stand erect with bowed heads, for just a moment, to give praise to their Heavenly Father. That is the picture of man at his best. Or walk the paths of the Psalms. There too you see man at his best. Psalm is but another word for praise. There he stands in the Psalms, man at his best. Hear him as he sings, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most high; to show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

If praise shows man at his best, ingratitude

shows man at his worst. "Ungrateful wretch" we often say, jokingly, of one who has had much done for him and who has returned scant praise. But it is not a joke, it is serious. "Ungrateful wretch" is too mild a phrase to apply to one who never turns aside to say courteously to men, "I thank you," who never lifts his eyes to say reverently to God, "I thank thee." It is ingratitude that burns over the fields of life, scorches them, and makes them sear and barren. Two men sat in a passenger train speeding through the Southwest. "I have just discovered," said one, turning to his seatmate, "what it is that I have been missing from the landscape; it's the grass. I haven't seen a patch of grass for hours. Isn't it strange how much grass means in a landscape? And yet a single blade isn't particularly beautiful." Take that thought and carry it on. Suppose each blade of grass should say, "I'm not beautiful, I'm not appreciated," and should sullenly refuse to grow. Imagine a city without lawns, a countryside without meadows, fields without their summer carpet of green. Such is life without gratitude—barren, wasted, sullen, seared, unfriendly.

Ten were healed. Let us take the ten as representing the whole of mankind. We are all recipients of the blessings of life. Whether we deserve them or not, we get them. The sinner is as well fed as the saint. The man of the world wears as good clothes as the man of God. "God makes his

sun to rise on the evil and the good. He sends his rain upon the just and the unjust." The goodness of God, the absolute impartiality of God, amazes me. My finite mind with its bias, with its whims, jealousies, revenges, and petty partialities cannot comprehend the boundless lovingkindness of God. True, all men do not make the same use of God's goodness. That very goodness, by the way a man receives it, may make him avaricious, hateful, selfish, sinful. Goodness has a different reaction in different lives. Some receive it and are made better thereby. Others receive it and are made worse.

It was so with the ten lepers. Ten were cleansed. They were all treated alike. Only one returned to give thanks. Where were the nine? Where are the nine? Is this the proportion of those who are grateful? Are nine out of every ten forgetful of the good they have received? Stand on Main Street at the busiest corner. Watch the throngs that pass. Can it be possible that nine out of every ten may be classed among the thankless? That was the proportion in Jesus' day. Has human kind grown more appreciative since then? Watch that throng of people as they continue up Main. Take your stand at a junction point and say to them, "You who are specially thankful for blessings received, turn about and glorify God." Nine out of every ten give you no heed, but keep right on. The procession is hardly broken. You would scarcely know that any had stopped to give thanks.

Nine out of every ten. What an indictment of the selfishness and sinfulness of the unregenerated heart!

Where are the nine? Our tendency is to take our blessings as a matter of course. We sometimes come across men who have that cowardly, detestable, debasing, debilitating attitude which says, "The world owes me a living." That same attitude toward the Infinite is more universal, "God owes me a living." We take all the common blessings of life for granted. Does the sun shine? Why shouldn't the sun shine! Were the harvests plentiful? Why shouldn't the harvests be plentiful! Did I have an excellent breakfast? Why shouldn't I have an excellent breakfast! Do I have good health? Why shouldn't I have good health! Do I have many friends? Why shouldn't I have numerous friends! We take all the common blessings of life as a matter of course, and we have no right to. They may not be lessened or increased by our attitude toward them, but we, our own souls, are radiant or sullen as we are grateful or thankless. A little Italian boy in one of our city schools said to the teacher, "Don't you think that it is God who has given us this pleasant weather, because there is not much coal? for he knows that coal is hard to get and is helping us out." Personally I think the boy is right. Whether we think he is right or not, we must admit that the boy's attitude of thankfulness makes the boy a more

splendid boy. He perhaps has only one stove in his house, and he knows how hard it would be to keep warm with that one stove should the weather turn biting cold, and to him it is no mere matter of course that the weather continues mild. He is not among the nine who go straight ahead. He turns to give thanks.

Where are the nine? Another tendency of human nature is shown here. It is the tendency to think of God in the time of trial and forget him in the hour of prosperity. It was so with the nine. They stood there, lepers, in sore need. They cried out, and we can hear to-day their eager, plaintive voices, "Jesus, have mercy on us." No sooner are they cleansed than they forget. Again, we remember God in a great emergency or deliverance, but forget him in the commonplace providences of our daily life. If a man has a hairbreadth escape from drowning, or comes out safe from a serious railway or auto accident, he at once acknowledges Providential deliverance; but let things go along in the even tenor of their way and he never thinks of God, the source of all good. How much better the attitude reflected in the daily prayer of one of God's saints of the years long gone, "Grant us, O Lord, to pass this day in gladness and peace, without stumbling and without stain; that, reaching the eventide victorious over all temptation, we may praise thee, the eternal God,

who art blessed, and dost govern all things, world without end. Amen."

Where are the nine? Still another human tendency is to be concerned chiefly with physical ailments and be utterly unmindful of spiritual defects. Ten were cleansed physically, and were satisfied. Only one sensed what that cleansing was typical of, the inner cleansing of the soul. Most of the appeals which come to one engaged in charitable or religious work present only the physical side; they are appeals to the physical need. We must minister to the physical needs, but O we long sometimes for a soul hunger on the part of people, for an eagerness to hear the words as did this one, "Thy faith hath saved thee."

Where are the nine? Despite the ungrateful majority, Jesus is still in the world, cleansing men's bodies, ministering to their physical needs, but he longs to get deeper into life, to touch life's springs; that men may not only say "He cleanses me," but "He saves me," and turn and glorify God. Where are the nine? There are times when I would rather be with the minority. I would rather tarry with the one than journey on with the nine.

XX

CHRISTMAS AT THE HOUSE

16

CHRISTMAS AT THE HOUSE

GOD IS WITH US!

Emmanuel.

Matthew 1: 23

CHRISTMAS is not a Crossword Puzzle. We do not have to rack our brain to find a word to fit it. The word we need, the one word which applies is given us, Emmanuel. Emmanuel is an old Hebrew word which means, *God is with us.* This is exactly the way it reads; it is present tense; it was true then, it is true now, God is with us. God is with us, how? In Jesus Christ. This verse is capable of no other translation. That unforgetable night in the life of Joseph and Mary and the world, the angel appeared to Joseph and said: "This son who is to be born is coming according to the Word of God, and his name shall be called Emmanuel, which means, 'God is with us.'" Now it would be very interesting to take several excursions into various realms of human interest and thought; to look out through our car window and say, "God is with us in Nature, God is with us in High Thoughts, in Holy Living, in Helpful Ways, God is with us in Happy Homes, in Human Love—it would all be most interesting, and most true. But on Christmas and with the name Emmanuel before us we cannot do that; we

must center our thought, as we are glad to do, upon Jesus, and we must say, "God is with us in Jesus Christ." Then let me unfold to you my thought as it has come to me through the window of this one luminous word, Emmanuel.

First, God is with us in the BIRTH of Jesus. God is with us in the birth of every child. The wonder and mystery of birth never cease. And the charm of a little child is ever a new and fresh charm. You must take a little babe and hold him in your arms to understand that. I think, I have no authority for it, but I think the wise men took the babe Jesus and held him in their arms, just a wee minute. And I think the shepherds when they came and saw the sweet babe said to Mary, one after another, "Let me hold him, just a minute; I'll be careful, I'll not drop him." It is human nature to want to hold a little babe. One evening we were out for dinner at a home where there is a little baby boy, six months old. He is a splendid, normal babe, and being a perfectly normal child ran true to form. On every other evening the normal baby takes his bottle and goes right to sleep, but when there are guests he too must stay awake and help entertain. So it was with this babe; he refused to act normal and go to sleep. So the mother brought him into the living room after dinner and sat holding him. I said to her, "Let me hold him a minute!" The minute became a half hour. Cuddling a baby is about the most

comfortable feeling I know. He kept his sky-blue eyes open a long, long time. Then with the rocking he began to get drowsy, and finally closed them tight and was fast asleep. Do you want to read a wonderful story? Despite the flood of cheap, flaming, poisonous stuff upon our magazine stands there are yet many wholesome books and helpful magazines. One of them is a true story from life; it is entitled "Richard, the Portrait of a Little Boy." It is one of the most beautiful things I have ever read, so sane, so happy, so full of common sense. Read it. And when you are done there will be tears in your eyes, but laughter in your heart—laughter that God comes to us through the birth of a little child. Yes, God is with us in the birth of every child, but he is with us in a special sense in the birth of Jesus. I am not thinking now of the mystery of birth, nor of the miracle of birth as it applies to Jesus, although that enters into it; rather I am thinking of the Gospel of John wherein he says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." It could not be otherwise. If God was to reveal himself to mankind, he must do it through a medium understood by men, and God himself is with us in the baby flesh of Jesus.

Second, God is with us in the GROWTH of Jesus. No sooner is a baby born than he begins to grow. So Jesus grew. Luke, a faithful biographer of

the life of Jesus, gives us this natural and lovely and accurate picture of Jesus: "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." What does the growth of Jesus mean to you? To me it means that God is with us in all the unfolding processes of life. Friday was a busy evening about the church. The people who were taking part in the pageant were here, and the members of the choir. While down in Bashford Hall the girls and teachers of the Intermediate Department were having a happy Christmas party; the tree was lighted and the air was full of the Christmas spirit. One of the girls, in taking off her coat, carefully removed a rose so as not to crush it. I said, "Let me see that rose!" I could not believe it was real. A rose in December! I touched it, I breathed its fragrance. It was not artificial. It was a genuine rose, in the chill and cold of December. I looked at it and recalled a sentence I read one summer as I was riding through the streets of old Portsmouth, N. H. I saw a church bulletin board, and on the board was this sentence: "Memory is given us that we may carry the roses of June into December." And I thank God for memory. I change the sentence and say: "Growth is given us that we may see God in all the unfolding processes of life, through all the year." And I look at Jesus, who came as a little babe, who grew as we grow, his little life unfolding, blossoming out, taking on strength,

personality, and power, and I say: "God is with us in the growth of Jesus."

Again, God is with us in the LIFE of Jesus. That is, I see God in the life of Jesus. There are men, multitudes of them, whose whole cycle of faith is contained in the one affirmation, "I believe in God." That is something, that is much, but that is not enough. What is Christianity? Christianity is Christ-ianity, the acceptance and finding of God in the life of Christ. One of the notable biographies of recent years is the two-volume biography, "The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page." Mr. Page rendered a service of inestimable fairness and value to England, to his own country, to the world and to humanity, in his ambassadorship to the Court of St. James during the trying days of the Great War. There were thousands of men and women in London who never crossed the Atlantic, who never touched foot upon the shores of America, who never saw the Statue of Liberty or the dome of the Capitol, but who saw the United States in Walter Hines Page. They believed in the United States because they believed in Walter Hines Page. My religion is something like that. I am like Philip, who said to Jesus, "Show us the Father [God], and we will be satisfied." With gentle rebuke Jesus replied, "What, have I been so long with you, Philip, and yet you have not known me? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father [God]. Why then do you

say, Show us God?" God is so full of mystery; Jesus simplifies God. God is far away; Jesus brings God near. God is so austere; Jesus makes God lovable. "For God so loved the world"—that is the picture of God made winsome in the life of Jesus. Some one has put it thus: "Jesus is the ladder between God and man." The ladder rests on the earth in the humanity of Jesus; it reaches heaven in the divinity of Jesus. On Jesus the ladder, God comes down and dwells with men and walks with them. On Jesus the ladder, men climb up to God and know him. God is with us in the life of Jesus.

Fourth, God is with us in the TEACHINGS of Jesus. Jesus' teachings are rightly balanced; they touch the head and they reach the heart. Jesus' teachings are universal. They apply to all races. They fit anywhere. They belong everywhere. They will work in the heart of Africa, as David Livingstone found; in the cannibal isles, as John G. Paton discovered in the sometimes drab and humdrum paths; in the home, as Susannah Wesley lovingly proved; in the cultured circles of literary endeavor, as Robert Browning nobly traced; in the trying places of governmental power, as Abraham Lincoln fully tested. Jesus' teachings fit all times. They keep pace with all progress. Civilization never advances beyond the teachings of the Master. With every startling leap of science forward the teachings of Jesus are found abreast of science at

the end of the leap. The teachings of Jesus fitted perfectly into the primitive, pastoral life of his own day. They dovetail exactly into the requirements of our own highly organized, mechanical age. Jesus' teachings are positive. They do not vanish into the thin air of unnecessary, unheeded "don'ts." Jesus says "do." For example, others spoke the Golden Rule. But it was negative. Men said, "Whatsoever ye would that men do not do unto you, do not do to them." Jesus gave it power in its positive form, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." Jesus' teachings reach the heart of all teaching—that is, the spirit. Men were concerned then, as they are now, about the letter of the law; Jesus, with all the arts of a great teacher, sought to draw their attention to the futility of the letter of the law, with its spirit dead. "You strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel," he said. "You are very careful to pay your minutest tithe, but you forget all about the really important matters of mercy and judgment and love." When men came to him to test him out on his knowledge of the law, he said, "I know the law, but the law is useless without love." I tell you that's the greatest teaching the world has ever known. That is the teaching the world needs to-day. It is the heart of Christianity. Some one has said that "a Christianity that is not applied is denied." Another has put it thus: "The average Christian resents his faith being de-

nied, but the average Christian is unwilling to have his faith applied." We have not begun to apply the teachings of Jesus; no, not in our personal relationships, certainly not in the relationships among the nations. George Bernard Shaw replied to the sneer, "Christianity failed in the World War," with the silencing sentence, "Christianity failed! Christianity hasn't been tried." The teachings of Jesus challenge us to-day. They tell us God is with us in the words that fell from his lips.

Again, God is with us in the DEATH of Jesus. Only one thing is certain in life, and that is death. Some one has facetiously added, "taxes." I appreciate a joke, but I like to have my jokes come at the proper time, and I do not like joking with death in that way.

> "Twilight and evening bell,
> And after that the dark!
> And may there be no sadness of farewell,
> When I embark;
> For, though from out our bourne of Time and Place
> The flood may bear me far,
> I hope to see my Pilot (God in Christ) face to face
> When I have crossed the bar."

There is one thing more, God is with us in the PEACE of Jesus. Isn't this the first and the final message of Christmas! It was the first song of the first Christmas morn, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men." Another reading is, "Peace on earth among men of good will." That is the secret. He is an

enemy of Jesus who preaches ill will. Our wrath was stirred a few days ago by that speech of a jingoist in Washington about our relations with Japan, that Japan is plotting war with the United States and we must be prepared. And our hearts were warmed when the man's cheap talk was silenced by words both from the White House and from the Secretary of State, who preached—yes, preach is the word—peace and good will. The President and the Secretary talk peace and good will because good will and peace are in their hearts. There is where it must be before it can come to the world. That is where Jesus puts it. What was his final gift to his disciples, and to us? It was peace. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Peace! O glorious Christmas message! Peace! O rich and radiant Christmas gift! Peace! The Peace of Jesus. An unruffled mind. A heart that is unafraid.

"And they who do their souls no wrong,
But keep at eve the faith of morn,
Shall daily hear the angel-song,
To-day the Prince of Peace is born."

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